KIRUNA CANDIDATE CITY
MOVEMENT
Below Ground. On Earth. In Space.
EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2029

Vi Är Ej
Maskiner

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Q1.
Our Concept

Our concept is still Movement – Below Ground, On Earth, In Space. But in Kiruna, Movement is not merely a concept. It's a daily experience and a way of life.

When we unpack our concept from different thematic angles, we reveal layer after layer of how it wraps around Kiruna. As a dimension of time, **Below Ground** is what's behind us, our history and our heritage and roots. **On Earth** is the present, where we stand in this moment in time and **In Space** is what lies ahead of us, the future, hopes and dreams. These lines connect to our ancestors before us, the people of today and future generations. They relate to a Sami worldview, where the world is divided into three spheres: the heavenly, the earthly and the underground. Where the living and divine beings share space in parallel worlds. They relate to what is happening to our city: The old city is currently being demolished and crumbling into the landfill below. The new city is coming to life on the surface, and the plans for the city yet to be are filled with life and memories still in the space of imagination.

What has changed are our programme lines. We have translated the story of Below Ground, On Earth and In Space into three lines that reflect the recent development of our artistic programme: **Seeds of Knowledge** – is about being in touch with the collective wisdom and knowledge that has been shared in Kiruna and our surroundings over the millennia, **Art of Transition** is about the movement on earth and how we transition from one state to the other in the present, and **Endless Horizon** is how we go forward in space and time, into a new tomorrow. More on this in Q5 and Q6.

If you have not been to Kiruna lately – or ever – it might be hard to grasp where these stories come from. Their essence is primordial, and our stories potentially appeal to every human being.

Imagine standing outside a fence. You can hear the roar and feel the shaking under your feet. You see the big trucks eating away the house that once was your home. You see the walls crumbling into pebbles. Imagine your child standing next to you watching her home being destroyed. A home where she took her first steps and said her first words. Imagine being asked to leave your home, your memories, your everyday life and start a new one.

It's brutal at times, heartbreaking for some and unbelievably sad for others. Not as terrifying and life-threatening as losing your home in a war, like many in Europe are currently experiencing. We would not want to compare our situation to that. But what is happening here in Kiruna is a reality for more than one third of the population in the city, of roughly 19,000.

It's a movement with a stereo soundscape: Here the noise of demolition, there the sound of a new city being built three kilometres further east. Building fences all over town, here and there.

Where does the soul of Kiruna go while this is happening? And how do we bring it back?

That is the deeper motivation behind this application and the concept Movement. We need the European Capital of Culture to help us make a fresh start, and inject joy and soul into the new city. To shape the new city not only functionally, but also at the human level, at the aesthetic level making it an environment that fosters well-being, pride and a sense of belonging. We need to connect the city and our many rural communities, as we depend on each other for a sustainable future and a thriving region for everyone.

In our old city we had a well-used Folkets Hus (Cultural Centre) for events and gatherings. It was not posh by any stretch. But it was well-loved. Generations of Kirunians took their first cultural steps there. Now it's closed, waiting to be demolished.

Since 2022 we have the new majestic venue Aurora Culture and Congress Centre with several stages, professional tech, a restaurant, library, art gallery, offices and a Youth Club. It's great! But we now have to work hard to bring back the audience – who are keeping their distance. Because that's human nature. We are attached to our usual stomping grounds and if a place smells all new and shiny, it is hard to understand that it's ours. We need to infuse our new venues, our city, our villages and our citizens with new artistic energy and curiosity for culture.

The European Capital of Culture would get Aurora and other venues in our far stretched municipality what they need to become; a welcoming home to locals and visitors.

Through the cultural and artistic activities in the framework of ECoC, the people of Kiruna could see and feel that they are not just the cut off part on a European map that stops right north of Stockholm. They could see that their new city is a place filled with arts and culture and human warmth, and that Europe is looking at us. What Europe and the people of Kiruna would see is not just sterile new buildings or new squares, but rather feel the bubbly atmosphere, creativity and joy.

Of course, we know that Movement gives us huge opportunities. Which other city in Europe gets the chance to completely reinvent itself? Shape a new place – almost like in a virtual environment. Only it is all real.

We have seen and experienced how Movement tickles both inspiration and curiosity, whether it is here at home or with our partners around Europe. So, we are continuing with our Movement Below Ground, On Earth, In Space: Moving our new city towards people, moving the Arctic from geopolitical Europe to geo-cultural Europe, moving our young people, moving with our cultural diversity, moving people off the sofa and into culture, moving the map of Europe to include the North in new cultural ways.

1 CONTRIBUTION TO THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY

Q2.
Updates on our Cultural Strategy

We are happy to say that Kiruna municipality has strengthened and extended our first Cultural Strategy, which now spans the period until 2029. It also connects with a first-ever Growth Strategy, still in progress and ready to be officially approved in early 2025, covering our strategic actions in terms of population wellbeing and sustainable growth for 2025–2030. Together, and with ECoC as our guiding light, they form the road map for sustained cultural development that was suggested in the report following the pre-selection.
The cultural strategy is more inclusive with a wider set of comments and contributions. During autumn of 2023 and spring of 2024, associations, organisations and civic society outside of the municipal council have had more opportunities to comment on and influence the content of the Cultural Strategy. This has been a way to anchor and involve interested parties in the constitution of the Cultural Strategy, finding a shared common ground to build upon. More on involving the local community is described in Outreach.

And, as we said above, ECoC can be the guiding light on our road. Running for the ECoC title closely supports the cultural strategy objective of becoming a better connected and culturally diverse municipality. This has not changed from the first application, but a clearer set of objectives has been formalised to set the structure of how and why this ECoC is important both to Kiruna and the whole region of Norrbotten.

Finally, Kiruna's Growth Strategy also links to the Cultural Strategy, as culture is a clear and important driver for our city development and population wellbeing. The key Cultural Strategy priorities are set out in the table on the next spread, and also correlates with our Growth Strategy in progress. We have mapped the key Cultural and Growth Strategy priorities against a number of key ECoC actions to show how ECoC can help us to become the outstanding example of culture-oriented urban planning, which we believe we can be.

LKAB
LKAB

Kiruna Cultural and growth Strategies: ECoC Connections

	1	2	3	4
Cultural Strategy priorities	A cultural underpinning of the industrial transformation of the entire region. Place social, cultural and artistic values at the heart of our transformation.	Children and young people find Kiruna playful, enjoyable, safe and have a wonderful childhood here. Empathetic cultural education to be a basis for sharing, respecting and celebrating our many cultures.	Have a vibrant, culturally adventurous city to encourage people to stay. Cultural wellbeing and satisfaction of current population and communities.	Celebrate and support our rural lifestyle and take great culture to the heart of the countryside. Maximise the cultural programme in existing and new venues in rural communities, supporting local associations.
Growth Strategy priorities	An attractive, safe and well-designed city provides a vibrant place to live. Housing and accommodation need to be improved as part of our sustainable city development.	Strategic actions must favor families, to improve the region as a family-oriented place to live and grow.	Focus on community welfare and quality of life. See temporary workers as community members and cultural consumers for better inclusion and stimulate this target group to become permanent citizens.	Prioritise key rural communities with high potential of growth and maintained community service.
ECoC actions; 9 for 29 (see Q3 for details)	**1. Kiruna: Creative City – culture as a driver for city development**	**2. A childhood dream – young Kiruna**	**3. The more the merrier: a thriving population**	**4. Near or far, wherever you are: rural community inclusion**

5	6	7	8	9
Support and encourage each cultural minority and indigenous people. Provide platforms for indigenous and minority cultures to share a creative language, traditions and heritage.	Enable places and forums for creative people on different levels. Develop a solid foundation of entrepreneurial and cultural jobs through capacity building.	Strengthen our European identity, connection, networks and relationships. Enable Kiruna's artists and creatives to be more visible at the European level and vice versa.	Rekindle the importance of cultural resources for a growing, developing and transforming society. Reach new target groups and marginalised groups.	Strengthen the perceptions of the Arctic region as a vital European cultural space. Use art, design and creative placemaking and placebranding to soften and reshape our hard industrial image.
See our minority groups and indigenous people as a cultural strength. Create awareness about our local minorities.	Promote and boost creative industries for a more inclusive and diverse job market.	Take care of our existing international and expat community. Use international networks and initiatives to reach out to European professionals needed in our region.	Strengthen the access to nature resources for an improved cultural infrastructure. Include new groups in cultural offerings for improved social inclusion.	Build a strong place brand, for local, national and international visability to foster a solid and proud community.
5. Braiding our cultural roots: minorities, indigenous people and heritage	**6. A Creative Place – for Creative Proffessionals and cultural jobs**	**7. My home Europe – European unity**	**8. Arctistic way of living – cultural literacy and audiences development**	**9. Support your local planet – cultural identity and international visibility**

Q3.

Impacts and success indicators

As with our concept, our intentions have not changed in terms of our long-term vision. But our focus has become sharper and more intense as we see the clear roadmap stretching out in front of us.

We genuinely believe that, if we manage to secure the title, we can be that example of culture-oriented urban planning that shows how culture can be the glue that helps the city really stick together. ECoC 2029 will help us reach our strategic goals of becoming a better place for our community: in education, social care and well-being. And also find a better place for us in Europe. With the Arctic no longer just a place to plunder scarce resources. Instead, a place whose values and culture contribute as much to Europe as our minerals.

In 2030 we want our citizens to be able to say:

During the last few years, we have really transformed into a culturally rich city. Now the building-sites are gone, and we have a city to be proud of. 2029 was a great year of celebrating our lively, creative and playful city! Our new Arctic home. A city more like the caring, well-known and loved hometown we deserve and long for after putting up with the years of gravel roads, dust, hammering, fences and potholes.

To describe what that citizen vision of 2030 might look like, we put our future glasses on and fast-forward to 2030, the year after our hoped for ECoC. We set out what we believe we can deliver, using the 9 for 29 ECoC "strategic movements" from Q2 as our framework for the future.

So, what does success look like?
In addition to the indicators and evaluation points, we have asked stakeholders and partners to share their views on what success means to them, and here are some quotes from their responses.

On the following page we set out a framework for our long term vision, build around our "9 for 29" which we introduced in Q2

"Success is making people feel more European and culturally engaged"

"Kiruna feels like a place full of opportunities, and no matter where I live within the municipality, I should feel like I can stay and chase my dreams"

"Success means the budget has worked out, and Kiruna, through its involvement in the European Capital of Culture movement, has remained financially stable"

"Success would be that everyone involved in this movement has gained a new friend along the way"

"Kiruna is being talked about in major national and international media, thanks to its role as a European Capital of Culture"

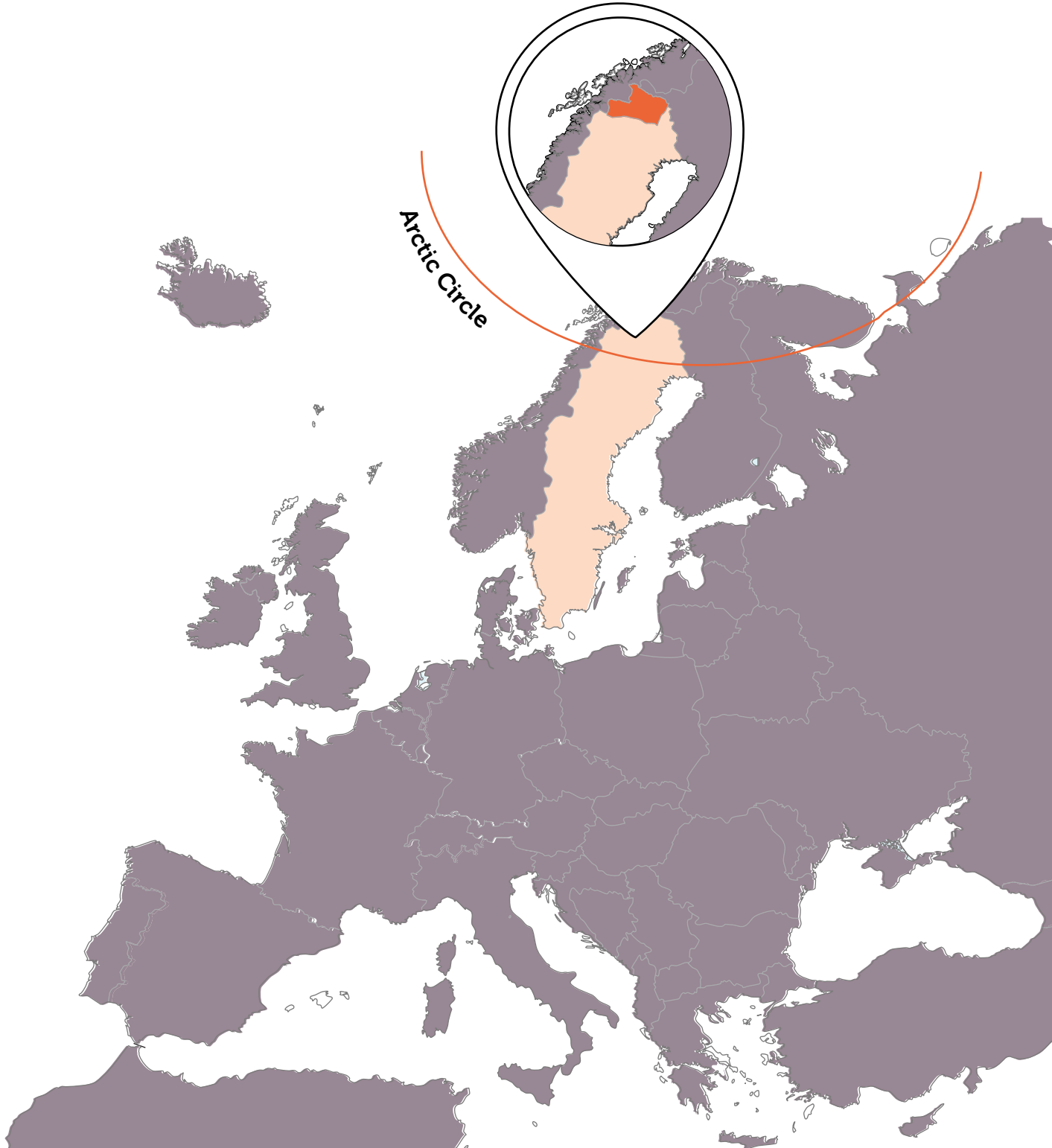
"More people in Kiruna feel part of a vibrant cultural life, and citizens begin to see themselves as carriers of culture"

"We've gained a softer, more respectful social climate in Kiruna, with an increased understanding of one another"

"Success is when people feel proud of Kiruna, seeing it as a fantastic place to live, no matter their age, gender, interests, or cultural background, thanks to the cultural shift this movement brings"

"More people in Kiruna feel needed and appreciated for their contributions to this European Capital of Culture movement"

"Young people feel that this movement offers something specifically for them, making life in Kiruna more enjoyable. This might encourage them to stay or even come back"



A new European tomorrow for Kiruna: Our Long Term Vision

9 for 29 Goals and Impacts	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
1. Kiruna: Creative City – culture as a driver for city development **Our goal:** To embed culture as a long-term driver for city development. **2030 brings:** We have been able to implement culture, art and design into our city planning at an early stage, finding new methods to safeguard cultural values and expressions in city development and community inclusion. Being in and under construction for so long, we have developed a set of tools for how to create temporary and creative environments for a settling community amidst building sites and fenced off areas.	Number of European collaborations/networks/ encounters Number of placemaking events and physical interventions in cityscape Creative city index	Artistic work included in the cityscape and in the region Community inclusion forms core elements of urban and rural plans
2. A childhood dream – young Kiruna **Our goal:** Our goal is for families to recognise the possibilities and experience joy in raising their children and young people here. We aim to ensure that young people do not lose valuable hang-out spots and rehearsal studios, and that growing up in a construction site does not take a significant toll on their well-being. **2030 brings:** Children growing up in our region are fully aware of and open to the many cultures we have around us. Kiruna in 2030 is a municipality where it's easy for young people to make their voices heard and to contribute to the community and its development. Kiruna will have plenty of meeting places for young people, where they can turn their dreams into reality.	Number of students participating in cultural activities and events Number of offers for children/ youths in their free time Number of activities initiated by young people Amount of money dedicated to children and youth activities in 2030 compared to 2024	Measuring perceptions of Kiruna across different age groups Measuring mental health issues, boredom, happiness
3. The more the merrier: a thriving population **Our goal:** To inspire more people to see Norrbotten as a place to live, in order to sustain our municipal services, cultural offers and industrial development. **2030 brings:** In 2030, ECoC has had a positive impact on the total population and the curve is facing upwards with a steady increase in population as a long-term impact. We have ways to get involved in our community and give people a chance to connect with each other.	Population trends – ideally growth Ratio of men and women to show a more balanced population!	Measuring the values of our citizens: - how do you see everyday life? - how do you perceive life quality / cultural life / social life? - do you consider staying/ moving away from Kiruna?

9 for 29 Goals and Impacts	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
4. Near or far, wherever you are : rural community inclusion **Our goal:** To embed culture as a long-term driver for city development. To develop and celebrate our strong rural communities and homestead associations, community associations and clubs that are a part of the key rural culture infrastructure and vital to our municipality. **2030 brings:** A well-established and connected cultural programme widely spread throughout our large municipality. Homesteads, churches, community houses are used as cultural centres for social gatherings and cultural events. ECoC has connected cultural workers across the entire region, providing skills exchange, job opportunities, collaboration and colleagues, both locally and internationally. Young and old will feel that they can grow and be involved in cultural life all over the municipality.	Number of events happening outside the city centre Number of community engagement events initiated in the countryside Number of networks, gatherings and meet-ups for professionals or semi-professionals in rural communities	Analysis of amount of information, marketing and communication targeting rural areas Transportation availability to take part in events and projects happening outside the city centre Perceptions of being included and part of cultural programme and offers in relation to the ECoC initiative and afterwards
5. Braiding our cultural roots: minorities, indigenous people and heri tage **Our goal:** To strengthen the many cultural identities within our own community, show the similarities, create understanding, empathy, respect and proudness of our cultural diversity. **2030 brings:** The social climate around cultural belonging, identity and expression has softened and turned into empathy and understanding for our cultural diversity. We now have an open platform for indigenous people and minority cultures to share a creative language, traditions and heritage, cultivate different artforms in innovative and traditional ways. Both in our local community and on the European scene.	Number of events specifically targeting or including cultural expressions from a Sámi, Tornedalian Kvän, Lantalaiset or Sweden-Finn community	Analysis of communication and marketing expressed in a minority language: Sami, Meänkieli or Finnish. Analysis of the promotion of minority languages Space for cultural minority groups to express a cultural heritage Education about cultural minorities, indigenous people and cultural diversity in schools

A new European tomorrow for Kiruna: Our Long Term Vision

9 for 29 Goals and Impacts	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
6. A Creative Place – for Creative Proffessionals and cultural jobs **Our goal:** Building capacity and a solid foundation of cultural entrepreneurs and skilled cultural workers. Not only to deliver a great cultural ECoC year, but for the future in the cultural job sector. **2030 brings:** We see that creatives living in Kiruna and Norrbotten are much more connected, by sharing workloads, projects and experiences with each other. The cultural tourism sector has developed new products, packages and job opportunities. The knowledge of applying for EU-funds and international programmes has increased. International collaborations have strengthened our European job market which is truly open to Europe.	Numbers of creative businesses registered Number of job opportunities for Culture and Creative industries Number of collaborations or projects resulting in working internationally Number of student in creative education – all levels – high school, cultural school etc	Review development of cultural tourism since 2024 Analysis of networks, meet-ups and conferences for CC sector
7. My home Europe – European unity **Our goal:** To empower northern Sweden's role and importance in Europe by better linking to European topics, events and artists. We aim to create a better European unity, so that we, Europeans, stand strong in hard times and in good times. **2030 brings:** Locals see themselves as more "European" and we have nudged the position from being a European frontier and outpost, to feeling part of something bigger and stronger together. We have raised awareness about our cultural life, heritage and lifestyle in Europe. By doing so, we popped the bubble of wrong ideas about living in the Arctic, Sápmi, Tornedalen and Lapland. Making our region more "livable" and accessible to fellow Europeans.	Number of European projects in the ECoC programme and continuing post 2029 Number of residencies – both in Kiruna and for local artists elsewhere in Europe.	Survey of the extent to which people feel European today compared to the 2025 baseline Measure what visitors think about Kiruna and the breadth of the "offer"

9 for 29 Goals and Impacts	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
8. Arctistic way of living – cultural literacy and audiences development **Our goal:** To introduce culture in unexpected ways, bringing events and experiences to where our audience is, rather than always expecting them to come to the traditional cultural venues. **2030 brings:** We have reached our toughest target groups. We have produced shows in places where you don't expect them to happen. We have raised the level of cultural participation and consumption in our community. To do so we have improved our cultural marketing and communications and made it easier for a wider community to know what is available to them. We have widened the idea of culture and extended the notion of how and where you consume it. We call it the Arctistic way of living.	Number of events happening outside the main cultural venues Level of participation in key target groups Level of cultural consumption more generally	Measure how the idea of culture has widened. Measuring awareness of cultural events Measuring the importance of culture
9. Support your local planet – cultural identity and international visibility **Our goal:** To slightly shift our place identity from a heavy industry-oriented city, to a more culturally focused identity. **2030 brings:** A softened-up image of Kiruna. More people feel welcomed and sense of community belonging. The personal, the human touch, emotions and care for each other are a critical part of our place identity and our core values. We want to show Europe that living in the arctic is wonderful and that we celebrate diversity and creativity!	See under 7 for European Unity quantitative assessments of our international connectivity and under 5 for minorities and cultural identity	Redesign our placebrand – track perception before and after Measure what values Kiruna stands for Track how people describe Kiruna -locally, nationally and internationally

Both quantitative and qualitative indicators will be measured against our baselines set before ECoC begins. See Q4.

Q4.
Monitoring and evaluation

The chosen organisation, institution, or external company that will follow the Kiruna 2029 process for monitoring and evaluation is yet to be decided by an open and public process, following Swedish procurement laws.

That said, we have opened up a dialogue with RISE, the Swedish Research Institute to track and monitor the Swedish ECoC process, regardless of the winning city. RISE works on big international projects with industry, academia, and the public sector. This makes RISE a suitable partner for handling an ECoC monitoring and evaluation process.

The regional main university, Luleå University of Technology, LTU, has a satellite hub in Kiruna with several courses carried out at Master's and PhD level, at the moment mainly in the space-oriented field. For the ECoC process we have established further contact with LTU ARC (Arts-based Research Centre), an interdisciplinary research platform at the university for art and science.

LTU ARC combines methods from different research fields and develops artistic research that actively wants to drive the development of cultural life forward for a sustainable and inclusive society. With a research school built around two research clusters, new doctoral students are introduced to exploratory research practices in interaction with senior researchers and artists. An external council guarantees the platform's relevance and anchoring among institutions in northern Sweden. We believe that, together with RISE, LTU ARC can carry out a strong and relevant evaluation.

Additionally, Kiruna is already a well-researched place in different fields. Climate change, polar research, space industry, mining, city development, and city transformation to mention a few areas that make Kiruna a rich field of academic research. During our candidacy process, several scholars from different universities have reached out, wanting to carry out academic work and research in relation to our ECoC action.

From the School of Business and Economics, Linnaeus University, Senior Lecturer in Business Administration with specialisation in Organisation, David Calås, PhD, will continue his research in 2025 on the subject: Cultural Creatorship and the (re)organisation of Cultural Life in Kiruna. He outlines his research as follows:

How is cultural life relocated and reorganised in Kiruna amidst the city's ongoing transformation? In what ways do cultural events – particularly those organised in connection with being a European Capital of Culture – contribute to processes of de- and re-stabilisation of different cultural domains and creative sectors in Kiruna?

Guided by these and other research questions, this project seeks to study the practices and strategies employed by cultural workers, cultural entrepreneurs, and leaders of cultural institutions in Kiruna to make sense of, cope with, and leverage their unique situation.

Employing qualitative methods inspired by organisational ethnography and embracing a hermeneutical approach, this project aims to contribute to a practice-based understanding of the interplay and dynamics between urban transformation (instigated by the domestic mining industry) and cultural investments (instigated by a mix of stakeholders).

Culture in the Cold
Building on the legacy and experience of Bodø 2024 and Oulu 2026, we propose a bigger Arctic research report, hoping to be the cultural Arctic link between our three cities. Culture in the Cold has the potential to combine the evaluations and best practice experiences for delivering a ECoC year in the most northern part of Europe and to see what we can learn – and share – from the results.

Baseline studies, milestones and dissemination
The first thing needed in 2025, after setting the ECoC organisation, is making sure the evaluator sets out a starting point for our monitoring, to establish a baseline and a series of milestones, so we can ensure that the legacy of our work can be measured beyond the 2030 vision we set in Q3.

To carry out the intended evaluation, we'll use artificial inteligence (AI) tools to collect and sort data. Interviews, surveys, and tracking points will all be part of the monitoring work.

In terms of dissemination, reports will be issued once the milestone data has been reviewed – so in 2026 and 2028, with the major report and presentation in 2030. The results will be disseminated through online and offline cultural conferences, gathering stakeholders, and interested parties.

As the ECoC organisation is established within the city administration office, we can secure a long-term impact assessment by the city in the following 3, 6, and 10 years after our title year. It is important for our legacy and long-term learning to do regular and frequent follow-ups on the outcome of the ECoC process. Additionally, as the competence and structure from the ECoC organisation will remain in-house within the city council, we are able to track and follow up on the long-term implications and learn lessons for the future, well beyond 2029.

We will use the *AGENDA 2030* as a tool to measure sustainability goals and to carry out our ECoC programme according to sustainable standards. *The Creative Cities Index* will also give us some helpful tools to compare other European cities of our size and benchmark our level of creativity.

What sort of information will we track and monitor?
In Q3, we set out the kind of indicators which we would like to develop with our M and E partners to give us the tangible measurement framework to see how we're doing. And, in addition to the work with Bodø and Oulu (Culture in the Cold) we're also interested in exploring the Creative Cities index, which we know many ECoCs link to their monitoring systems.

We're not so focused on moving up the table. Rather we think that the elements of the model that the index uses: Vibrancy, the Creative Economy and the Enabling Environment do link very neatly to the indicators we are aiming to develop and give us a clearer path to evaluate where we are on our journey to the new tomorrow that ECoC could bring for Kiruna.

When looking at how the model works across different parts of Europe, we see that our part of the map (North Eastern Europe) tends to score highest for the Enabling Environment – Scandi sensibility and all that, we guess. It is fascinating how different parts of Europe score well against certain criteria and that is an opportunity for us to work together across the ECoC world, showing in tangible terms how culture really can be the driver for the kind of sustainable and inclusive city development we are all searching for.

CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC CONTENT

2

Q5.

Our artistic vision and strategy

Our artistic vision is to share our strong and captivating stories, indigenous traditions and our Arctic take on contemporary challenges that affect all of Europe.

We have a few cultural cathedrals and an abundance of creative space. We have state-funded institutions as well as a wide span of grass-roots movements and world-class artists. Welcome to our playground.

Movement – Below Ground. On Earth. In Space. is something that defines us, that runs through the veins of everyone living here, both historically and currently, regardless of culture or traditions.

The core of our artistic vision is to always apply a female gaze, keeping our young community involved and integrating perspectives from the indigenous Sami people and Tornedalian cultures on their own terms. Making sure the artistic vision becomes reality, our strategy is that whenever you visit Kiruna, there will be an event going on, a cultural site to enjoy or a sensorial experience to be had, regardless of the time of year.

Just like Kiruna itself, our strategy is to use a mix of contrasting elements in our programme to keep an interesting balance. A few projects, like the Human Machine and Kultura Kiruna, are large-scale for big audiences. Others are exclusively for you to explore on your own, like Culture Knocks on Your Door or having a date-night at a fireplace around a Natural Gathering site. Behind the Gates will go down deep and Eadnámet will rise high above. Take a Bite at Nature will last all year and Open up to Culture just for a moment. Regardless of depth, length or width, they will all spark a movement within you.

With our vision and programme, we will raise sensitive topics around the city transformation, the right of land and rural exclusion. Through creative methods and artistic outlets we want to touch upon issues that reveal cracks and create conflict within ourselves and our society, alongside the joy and compassion that we have for one another and for future generations, history and nature. We see the cracks appearing everywhere and we will use the movement as opportunity for something new, vibrant and colourful to take place.

Building towards our ECoC year, Kiruna 2029 wants to set a new cultural standard by highlighting the artistic quality and diversity that we can gain, create, and share in Kiruna. With new artistic expressions and international dimensions, we aim to build competence in the audience, young and old, to join the cultural life and experiences more often

We will dig deep, all the way – into the mycelium of stories, histories, contemporary myths and future legends. In addition to building a new city, producing a world-class flagship cultural event requires a solid foundation of creative professionals and an engaged community. We will turn people's eyes towards the sky by inviting them, to not only imagine new futures, but to shape those futures with their own creativity and input.

Kiruna's citizens of all ages will have the possibility to step in and be part of the Human Machine dance company, or the Human Machine choir, or the Youth production team, years in advance of our celebration year as a way to slowly and steadily build competence in our region and capacity to deliver magical Human Machine events out of the ordinary.

By working with local, national and international professionals, organisations and associations, we'll be able to highlight the specific contrasts of Kiruna, the past and the present, the light and the dark, the height and the depth, the humans and the machines.

Welcome!
Tervetuloa!
Bures boahtin!
Välkomna!

Q6.

The cultural and artistic programme and structure

As we refined our artistic programme during the selection phase, we chose to convey the theme of Movement – Below Ground, On Earth, In Space through relatable, everyday stories. These stories reflect the essence of our daily lives, making complex themes more accessible and engaging. The programme is now structured into three main lines:

Seeds of Knowledge explores the blending of cultural heritage with new artistic expressions, symbolising the growth and evolution of knowledge through art.

Art of Transition delves into the shifting landscapes of our urban and natural environments, helping us make sense of both physical and metaphorical movement in our lives.

Endless Horizon broadens our gaze towards a future filled with possibility, focusing on the expansiveness of tomorrow and the untapped potential that lies ahead.
Each of these lines are anchored by a trilogy of flagship events, presented as the opening, mid-season, and closing ceremonies of the year.

Together, these three events form a cohesive narrative titled the **Human Machine.** As a metaphor for the interaction between human beings and their environment, particularly the way technology and industry interact with human lives, heritage and culture. While they are designed to be interconnected, tell a compelling story when experienced as a whole, each event is also powerful in its own right, standing alone as an individual artistic statement.

Our aim with these three main events is to balance Kiruna's seasonality by spreading out cultural activities across the year. This approach avoids crowding during traditional peak tourist seasons, ensuring ample space and opportunity for visitors drawn specifically by our flagship events. By doing so, we invite a broader audience to experience Kiruna's unique cultural and natural landscapes at different times of the year, promoting sustainable tourism and cultural engagement.

Project budget shown as:
€ = 0 - 200 000 Euro
€ € = 200 000 - 600 000 Euro
€ € €= 600 000 - 1 500 000 Euro

SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE

Budget for programme line: 6.1 m Euro

Our memories and the deep wisdom that has been shared by our forewalkers have never before been as important to remember and carry with us into the future, as now. In a place where physical things such as minerals, an expanding built environment and newly constructed roads are often in focus, it is important to keep in mind the people and intangible cultural heritages still existing in the midst of it all. Seeds of Knowledge puts us in touch with our past and the stories that hold profound value. It is the stories of a resilient indigenous people, a thriving industrial history, minority groups making their voices heard and living plants that tells us about the earth beneath us, if we take the time to learn and listen. It is also stories about workers striking for their rights, Sámi villages fighting for their survival in colonial structures, the hardship of getting listened to when your language has been silenced generations ago by state politics, and an earth quickly melting before our eyes.

By listening and learning from each other's traditions across borders, we cultivate new understandings. Through shared experiences and knowledge, we uncover common ground and shape a collective future. We blend traditions with contemporary artistic expression, creating dynamic new stories and planting seeds of knowledge for generations to come.

THE
ART
OF
TRS
ITN
Endless Horizon

HUMAN MACHINE CHAPTER 1

Our opening ceremony the Human Machine embodies the story of this special place through a three-layered universe: We move underground, we move on the surface, we move into space.

We'll tell the story of the Sami following the reindeer herd, tightly working together for survival with the people who settled along the rivers and slowly starting to cultivate the lands. The first findings of minerals, how the iron-ore became a reason to build a city. The hard winters and the difficulties to grow crops. The love and immortality of never-ending summer days. The hard labour of making way for a railway. The flourishing society. Fast forward. The move and transformation of a city. Hope for the future and new beginnings. At the same time, the demolished places, fading memories and borders redrawn. The devastating loss of land, a way of living and sacred places for indigenous people still to this day fighting for their rights. We are in this together. As a community we are all irreplaceable links and joints of empathy and emotions in the collective Human Machine. A show full of sparkling colours, where we can all fit in and share the movement. We'll link the programme and narrative of the opening ceremony to the indigenous Sámi culture and the richness of the Tornedalian heritages and give the spectators a contemporary and modern ceremony with artistic excellence.

You'll hear the sound of thousands of reindeer hooves flowing down the mountain, the buzzing sound from powerlines and drones, experience traditional duodji through digital soundscapes and the landscapes echoed in the jojk. The underground is made visible through artistic expressions as a resting place, a storyteller of a vivid spiritual world. The sound and fire-sparks of welders and miners from South Africa, Poland, Germany, United Kingdom and Kiruna, hammering their way below ground keeping the magnetic iron-ore heartbeats pounding. Dancers lifted up high by machines and suspended from cranes, choreographed by some of Sweden's most exciting dance artists. Through dance, music, digital projections, and augmented reality experiences, the audience will explore the ethical, emotional, and philosophical challenges that comes from living in a contrasting, hybrid world of digital and analogue reality. It is a celebration of human resilience and ingenuity but also a deep inquiry into what is lost and gained when we "merge" with our machines.

Partners and future collaborations: Walk the Plank (UK), Giron Sámi Teáhter, Icehotel, Luleå University of Technology, Girdit Media, Nutti Sámi Siida, Tornedalsteatern, Norrbottensmusiken, Norrbottensteatern, Verdde, Sveriges Television SVT, Dans i Nord, Heart of Sound, Bada i Kultur, School of Culture, Local associations for choirs, dancers and musicians.

Timeframe: 2028 – 2029 **Budget:** €€€

VINDVAKA
GIRON SÁMI TEÁTHER

KIRUNEUM – WHERE COMMUNITY GROWS

Kiruneum will be a new gathering place to learn about the past, present and future of Kiruna in new creative and digital ways. The history of this place goes back further than the built environment. The stories are many, sometimes overlapping, and sometimes the ground for conflicting opinions and interests. A place like Kiruneum has long been in demand by residents and visitors in Kiruna.

Here, there is a circular narrative of how history, present, and future are connected, how stories and experiences are shared by several to create a future filled with a greater understanding of each other and a more generous social climate.

Inspired by Ájtte – the principal museum of Sámi culture based in Jokkmokk, and the help of contemporary artists like Gideonsson Londré, who have worked through artistic research with the museum's special way of creating and communicating their collections, exhibitions built on the people and the stories behind the physical pieces will be shown in the Kiruneum. Here there will be room for a multitude of storytellers and cultural diversity from the whole area.

The Kiruneum will be located in a refurbished building, in the old mining area TGA (more about TGA in Q25), within walking distance from the new city centre. It will provide spaces for exhibitions and projects indoors but will also tell the different stories with AR techniques that activate outdoor spaces. Through projects carried out by Kin Museum for Contemporary Art in Kiruna during the years leading up to Kiruna 2029, local history captured in Borg Mesch (1869-1956) rich photography from Kiruna and the surrounding areas will be interpreted through contemporary views in new art pieces by artists like Geir Tore Holm (NO), Norra kollektivet, Marysia Lewandowska (PL/UK) and Mikhail Tolmachev (DE).

An important feature to be exhibited in the Kiruneum will be a digital tool to make the process of moving a city visible. This is the next step in an ongoing collaboration between the Departments of Architecture and Design and Computer Engineering of the Politecnico di Torino, Italy, and the City of Kiruna. The digital tool will allow residents and visitors to visualize and map the complex urban process. A beta version of the tool will be developed in 2025 at Politecnico di Torino through a combination of research and pedagogical activities.

Partners and future collaborations: Kiruna municipality, Folkrörelsernas Konstfrämjande Konstfrämjandet Norrbotten, Kin Museum of Contemporary Art, Kiruna School of Culture, Norrbottens museum, Ájtte, Politecnico di Torino (IT), Trans Europe Halles.

Timeframe: 2025 – 2029 **Budget**: €€

DIGITAL ART SPACE

Digital Art Space will be a programme offering everything from conversations with artists worldwide, lectures on art projects, panel discussions with writers, poetry readings, to film screenings. This is a way to share our programme on a digital platform to reach a wider audience.

Together with Kiruna School of Culture, a youth perspective will be included to Digital Art Space through VR-Culture – a project that aims to promote artistic expression and networks between young people in Europe through an innovative VR-based collaboration. Participants from Schools of Culture in Kiruna, Germany and Norway create digital sculptures that will be shown at the digital platform Digital Art Space.

After the ECoC year the material generated on the platform will also function as an archive and time document about the ECoC year added to the Kiruneum.

Partners and future collaborations: School of Culture, &friends, Driftwind.

Timeframe: 2028-2029 **Budget:** €

PRACTISING OUR KNOWLEDGE

Practicing our Knowledge is a project about our intangible cultural heritage, common landscapes and shared stories. This project opens up conversations between expressions, social contexts and the meaning of the intangible cultural heritage we share between countries in Europe. By inviting practitioners working with crafts and knowledge from UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list to connect with practitioners in crafts, duodji and contemporary art based in Kiruna and Sweden we create opportunities for exciting encounters and exchanges. Between expressions from different cultures and times, with a desired outcome to add duodji to the UNESCO list.

The project brings together heritage, traditional knowledge and contemporary art through mutual recognition. For example practitioners of Koisov painted ceramics from Ukraine explore their intricate designs together with duodji pattern traditions and contemporary Sámi artists like Erika Stöckel who often works with ceramics. Elechek, Kyrgyz female headwear and connected traditional knowledge and rituals from Kyrgyzstan is tied together with the ládjogahpir, a traditional Sámi headwear, through the works of contemporary Sámi artists like Outi Pieski and researchers in this field like Eeva-Kristiina Nylander. In a collaboration between historical and archaeological research, social activism and craftivism, including artistic practices and values, ideas and dreams of Sámi women of today, the project furthers connects with contemporary artists like Helena Byström and choreographers like Anna Källblad's work Sirens. A public art piece that explores folk dances and traditional clothing that carries visible traces of exchange between cultures and countries across the world, where movements, patterns, colours and techniques both repeat and differ.

The project includes exhibitions, craft events, dance and music, all celebrating differences and making our similarities visible. To gather all this practical knowledge and intangible legacy, the long-term goal is to establish a permanent Creative Hub in one of the cultural buildings being moved to our new city centre. A meeting place and community centre with space for activities such as pottery courses, craft circles in embroidery or knitting, and other collective or professional creative outlets. The Creative Hub will be a place for inspiration and innovation of traditional techniques and contemporary art.

Partners and future collaborations:
Konstfrämjandet Norrbotten, Riksteatern, Sámi Duodji, Aejlies – Saemien Jarnge, Riksantikvarieämbetet – Swedish National Heritage Board, Kiruna municipality, Embassy of Moldova, SWAN Residency Network, Västmanlandsmusiken, CODA (NO), Nordens hus (FO), Riva (FO), Moving Borders (MX), CAMP_iN (MX), Riksscenen – nationalscen for folkemusikk og folkedans (NO).

Timeframe: 2025 – 2029 **Budget:** €€€

EADNÁMET

Eadnámet ('our mother' in North Sami language) is a contemporary art project about creating a richer history and visibility for Sami perspectives, knowledge and traditions. Often forgotten or simply overlooked in the official narrative of this area is the fact that long before the mine hollowed out the ground, before the city was planned, the land had nurtured an indigenous people whose existence is still to this day present and dependent on the use of the territory.
The land which we will gather upon during the ECoC year in Kiruna 2029 is the ancestral homeland of the Sami people. We want to ensure that Kiruna 2029 have a strong Sami presence that includes a variation of Sami perspectives and contemporary Sami art expressions throughout the whole year and in every step on the way.

By collaborating with the nomadic art institution Verdde, polyvocal works will be created, inspired by the practice of Land Acknowledgements that today rarely occurs in Sweden. This will be a way to show the Sami presence in this region so coming generations can recognise themselves in the lived environments and the telling's about and from this place outside the Sami community.
Even though the Sami way of life is to not take more then you need from nature or leave traces behind this project will create noticeable marks in the built environment of the indigenous Sami people living here today - through contemporary Sami art that raise questions about the notion of the land and who it belongs to, if anyone.

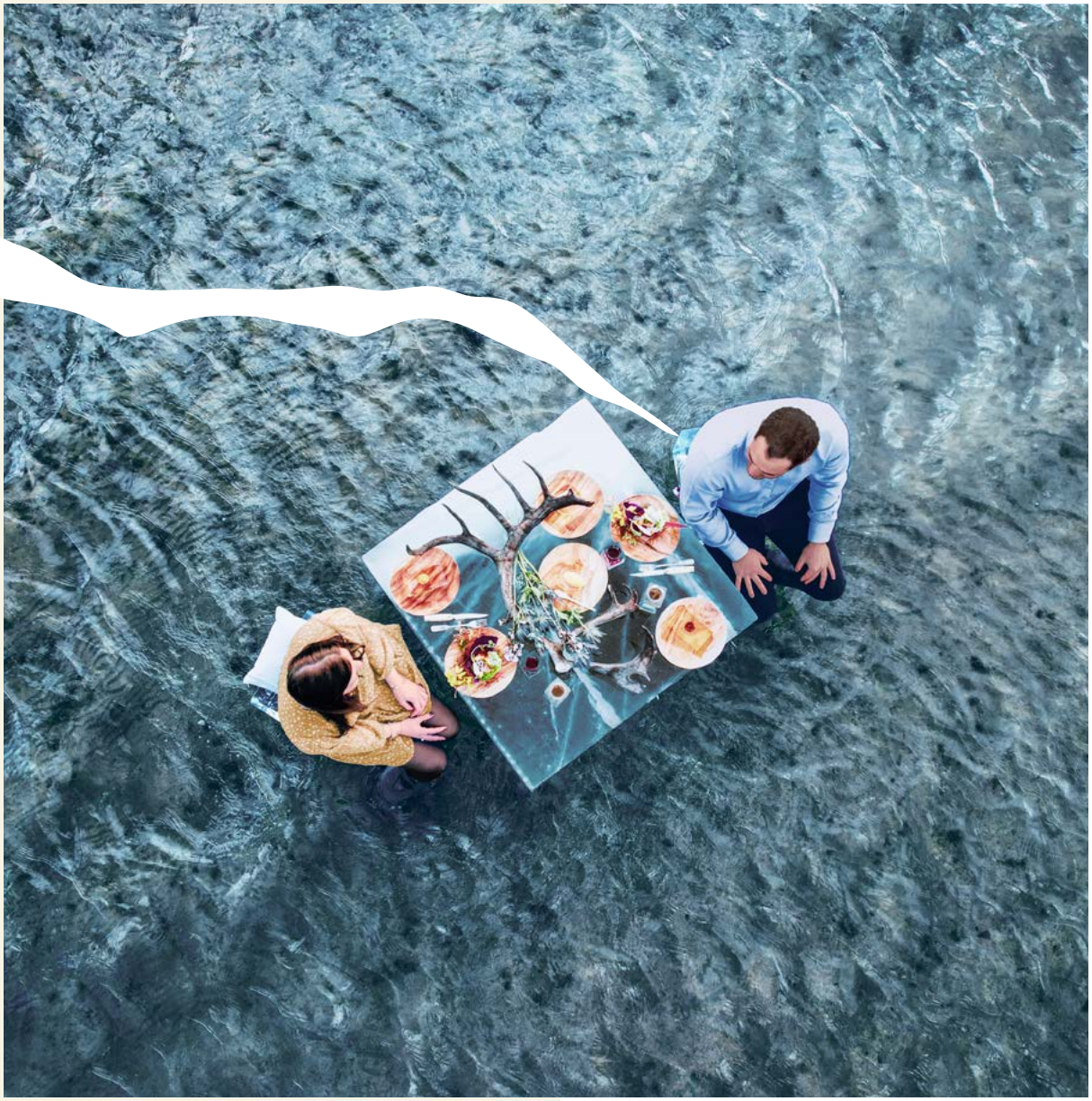
TILDE-RISTIN KUOLJOK
HÁLIJDIBME BADJELÁNDAS / WISHES FROM THE HIGHLANDS
VERDDE

Temporary projects like a 10-meter-high inflatable mountain sculpture floating in the parts of the lake Luossajärvi that is still not emptied due to the mine industry, reminding of the sacred Sami places that no longer exists. A performance that includes material from artefacts from Ájttes collections interpreted by duojars and sounds from Samiska kören (the Sami choir) in Kiruna. As a part of Eadnámet permanent art pieces for public spaces in Kiruna are created. We add a layer of contemporary soundart that recognise the paths once stepped on by the forewalkers of this area, for you to hear while walking through the new city park in Kiruna. Bits and pieces from textbased works stretched out over buildings, windows and streets in the new city center and through buildings and streets in surrounding villages. Activated by workshops about writing for young people.

Eadnámet activates the Digital Art Space, whit works that invites us to experience ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) in Northern Sami, and to meet duodji in new ways, through the sound of the tapping, caressing and squeezing of the Sami craft.

Partners: Verdde, Vermie K, Aejlies – Saemien Jarnge, Ájtte, Norrbotten Region, Jillat – Sámi dance centre, Statens Konstråd (Public Art Agency Sweden).

Timeframe: 2025 – 2029 **Budget**: €€



DET DUKADE BORDET
ICEHOTEL

TAKE A BITE AT NATURE

Kiruna has a landscape full of ingredients and arctic flavours that have formed our connection to nature, foraging, way of cooking and our traditional dishes. We have access to Arctic char, reindeer, moose, ptarmigan, blueberries, cloudberries and all sorts of edible plants. This is worth sharing with an international audience and to learn and be inspired by other food artists who have managed to spark excitement and innovate traditional dishes into modern times. We need to pass on traditional dishes and way of cooking to younger generations, knowledge that tends to get lost as the decades go by. By working with cultural operators, international chefs and food artists we present to you the taste of culture.

Food and access to food is a universal matter of survival, and in times where a changing climate affects harvests and shifts fields for cultivation, we can, through knowledge and traditions, learn to follow nature and live with and from it in a sustainable symbiosis. Artistic and creative eating experiences, cooking classes, traveling food trucks, pop-ups and a dive into our rich knowledge of how to take care of nature, and make use of what nature's offering, with care for the future.

Partners and future collaborations: Nordic Chef Associations, SVT, Spill, Camp Ripan, Niehku Mountain Villa Arctic Gourmet Cabin, Bada i Kultur, Embassy of Slovenia, Marije Vogelzang (NL), Institute of Urban Culture Bielsko-Biala (PL).

Timeframe: 2028 – 2029 **Budget:** €

BEHIND THE GATES

Behind the Gates is a dance performance, an exhibition and a history project that explores the story of women workers in heavy industry around Europe in a historical, present and future work perspective. And the story where it all started: the suffrage movement.

At the beginning of the 2000s, the big mining company in Kiruna actively started hiring more women, to balance out the gender inequality in the company. This changed the demography, mentality and gender structures in Kiruna. Could women pull off the same heavy workload as men? What did these women have to put up with? The narratives from women working in different industries, take us on a journey of trusting your co-workers with your life, creating strong bonds, independence and equality.

The production of Behind the Gates will be done by dance companies in collaboration with the project Womanpedia by Budweis 2028 and Stockholm's Kvinnohistoriska, an innovative museum highlighting women's history relating to current issues.

One of the stories will be told by Kin Museum of Contemporary Art during the years leading up to 2029 in a project about a ground-breaking sanctuary for women: Komtemåtta. As a result of women's suffrage in 1921, and initiated by some of the women activists, Fogelstad Female Civic School was founded at the Fogelstad estate (1925-1954). It was a self-organised and world-unique educational experiment by women and for women where training in "citizenship" was a part of the curriculum. The exhibition includes archive material such as photography, film as well as books by and about the school's founders and participants. The exhibition will include already existing works of art that directly or indirectly relate to the Fogelstad Female Civic School by, among others, Siri Derkert (1888-1973), Olivia Plender (London), Åsa Elzén (Stockholm), Åsa Sonjasdotter (Berlin) and Petra Bauer (Stockholm). In collaboration with Norrbottens Museum, women from the region who participated in courses at Fogelstad are also included.

Partners and future collaborations: Stockholms Kvinnohistoriska, Norrbottens Museum, Kin Museum for Contemporary Art, the Modern Museum of Art, Kvinnsam, Gruvkvinnor, IF metal, Moa Autio, Mikkel Hobitz, Fanny Kivimäki, Big Wind, Dans i nord, Kungliga Svenska Balettskolan (Royal Swedish Ballet School), Gothenburg University Library, Jillat Sámi dance centre, Budweis 2028.

Timeframe: 2027 – 2029 **Budget**: €€

ART OF TRANSITION

Budget for programme line: 4.3 m Euro

In a city where the ground beneath our feet transforms daily, culture offers a way to anchor ourselves amid the flux. Streets disappear, buildings come and go, and new landscapes emerge, we transform. In Art of Transition we are in the present, reclaiming and repurposing material like wood left behind from old houses, artifacts from displaced neighbourhoods, natural materials from this area like reindeer antlers or the minerals dug out from under the ground. Art creates continuity, allowing us to carry the past forward in innovative ways. In places where memories have been lost, culture can make use of the remains to rediscovered them and to create new stories, laying the foundation for future generations to continue building and creating their own mental and physical connections to a place.

Art of Transition takes us on a journey through transformed physical and digital worlds, addresses the deeper, more intangible shifts that come with change – social transformations, power dynamics, emotional struggles, and shared joys.

HUMAN MACHINE CHAPTER 2

Our mid-season ceremony embodies the story of this special place through a three-layered universe: We move underground, we move on the surface, we move into space.

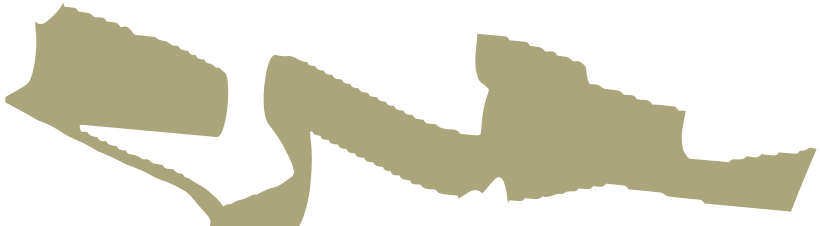
As the snow melts away and the city emerges from winter's hibernation, Kiruna enters a transformative period during May and June. The streets may not look their best, with remnants of snow revealing hidden rubbish, and nature's greenery still reluctant to wake. But instead of shying away from this raw, in-between season, Human Machine – Chapter Two takes on the challenge of turning it into a canvas for creative renewal. This mid-season event, timed with the arrival of the midnight sun, injects vibrancy and energy into the city. Chapter Two of Human Machine thrives on collaboration, drawing together local and international artists, musicians, and performers to create a multi-sensory experience that reflects the town's diverse cultural identity. The integration of video art, live music, and dance into the public space symbolises the interconnectedness of people and their environment, tying into the ongoing trilogy of the human machine — how we exist within, influence and are influenced by the forces around us.

The event reclaims public spaces with bold, colourful performances and art projects, filling the city with life and creativity just as the midnight sun begins to cast its endless light over the landscape. This chapter embraces mobility, with cultural events touring the entire municipality, ensuring that even the most rural areas are included in the celebration. Schools become hubs of artistic engagement, and communities in far-reaching villages participate in the experience. events touring the entire municipality, ensuring that even the most rural areas are included in the celebration. Schools become hubs of artistic engagement, and communities in far-reaching villages participate in the experience.

Human Machine – Chapter Two transforms a season of imperfection into a vibrant cultural celebration, offering new perspectives on how art and nature can intersect to inspire renewal in both the city and its people.

Partners and future collaboration: Walk the Plank (UK), Giron Sámi Teáhter, Icehotel, Luleå University of Technology, Girdit Media, Nutti Sámi Siida, Tornedalsteatern, Norrbottensmusiken, Norrbottensteatern, SVT, Konstfrämjandet Norrbotten, Dans i Nord, Heart of Sound, Bada i Kultur, School of Culture, Local associations for choirs, dancers and musicians.

Timeframe: 2028-2029 **Budget:** €€



ARCTISTIC RESIDENCE

With a creatively and geographical extensive artistic programme, we offer artists from all over Europe to work on site in specific local conditions and environments. Leading up to the ECoC year we will organise new locations and set-ups for practitioners to take part of our culture, and leave a bit of theirs, through residencies that contributes to various parts of the artistic programme. Apart from the municipality's existing artist's apartment close to the new city centre, we will also develop sites around the region together with our tourist organisation Kiruna Lapland and their members, the Swedish Tourist Association's mountain huts, local homestead organisations, Luleåbiennalen, Norrbottens residency network and Jillat Sámi dance centre.

The Arctistic Residence is a way to introduce artist from Europe to Kiruna and the other way around. The long-term impact we expect is for Kiruna to continue developing a vibrant cultural scene, setting the tone for the local and regional art- and cultural scene, in a way that makes it possible to continue working with European artists long after 2029.

The plan is to create a residency programme that connects with the dramatic environments and transformations that exist in Kiruna and includes a wide range of artistic expressions and will be designed for participation. The residency programs will be ways to meet and converse with Europe throughout the years leading up to 2029.

Partners and future collaborations: Swedish Lapland AiR, Resurcentrum för konst Norrbotten (Visual Artist Support Center Norrbotten), STF (the Swedish Tourist Association), Kiruna Lapland, Luleåbiennalen, Kiruna municipality, MAMA, Jillat Sámi dance centre, Aejlies – Saemien Jarnge.

Timeframe: 2027 – 2029 **Budget:** €

MAKING IT VISUAL

Making it Visual invites artists from different European countries to create with materials from the demolition processes to create site-specific installations, both physical and digital. The work will be documented as a part of the process to inspire other places to make use of materials and stories in a circular economy and storytelling. Residents and visitors in Kiruna will have the opportunity to experience fantastic works of art by international artists that depict a place in constant change.

By re-using waste or demolished materials from sites around Kiruna, the pieces that will be created by varius artist from different places in Europe are linked together by stories and material that tell about their origin and place. This project contributes to a circular and green economy in a creative way. Some of the works will also be created with Augmented Reality technology (AR), in order to be experienced through a phone or device and become adapted pieces of digital works for public spaces. With our partner Luleåbiennalen the project will include an extensive outreach process.

Partners and future collaboration:
Luleåbiennalen, KKV Luleå (artist´s collective workshop), Konstnärsnämnden, Iaspis, ResArtist (AU), Acme Artist Studios (UK), Transartist (NL), The Swedish sculptors' association, Institute of Urban Culture, Bielsko-Biala (PL).

Timeframe: 2025 – 2029 **Budget**: €€

TRANSBORDERING ART

Space is information. And so perhaps there is little surprise that in the face of climate change and obvious changes in how we must travel, we have two ECoC projects in 2028 and 2029 connected via tracks and cultural train rides. Great minds think alike. Kiruna 2029 and Bourges 2028 are joined though the projects TransEurope Culture and our Transbordering Art, giving us a way to extend the legacy of Bourges, and add our own twist with the notion of the ECoC experience starting the minute you step on the platform and the journey towards the Europen Capital of Culture begins.

In Transbordering Art, you will be able to choose train travels that offer artistic experiences by European artists in different ways along the journey to Kiruna. The art will take place on train platforms as the train stops for a short while to let people on and off, others will happen next to you as you have a coffee in the restaurant cart or will be possible to listen to as you fall asleep to a quickly passing and changing landscape outside the windows of the night train going north.

This is a way to make the experience of the ECoC year in Kiruna start with a green way of traveling. An exciting way of promoting an environmentally friendly way to take part of the programme in Kiruna, and like pop-ups around train stations in Europe. It is also a perfect way of weaving artists and cross-border art organisations together in a project that makes Europe connected through train tracks, art and culture.

The Performance network of NOPE will start their journey already in 2026 with Oulu, producing the first performative project along the railway between Finland, Sweden and Norway. For Kiruna 2029 the plan is to expand the project to be taking place along railways through Europe in collaboration with the network Transbordering Laboratory's members.

Partners and future collaborations: N.O.P.E performance network (FI/SE) working with Associazione 47/04, Krytyka Polityczna Political Critique (PL), GFGZ – Gesellschaft zur Förderung der grenzüberschreitenden Zusammenarbeit (CH), Visual Voices (CY), Teater Na Konfini (SI/IT), Slubfurt E.V.(PL/DE), HapKult (SE/FI), Društvo humanistov Goriške Goriška Humanist Association (SI).

Timeframe: 2029 **Budget:** €€

LEILA NUTTI
ROOT CRAFT

OPEN UP TO CULTURE

Open up to Culture aims to position Kiruna as a best-practice example of how urban transformation can honour cultural heritage and promote sustainable, people-centred development. With culture as the heartbeat of Kiruna's new city, this project is an initiative designed to infuse the upcoming celebrations, openings of new buildings and sites, like the new City Park, and celebrate Kiruna's historic city transformation with creativity, heritage, and artistic expression.

Next year, in 2025, we have plenty of celebrations ahead of us; Kiruna as a city is celebrating 125 years, we are celebrating 25th anniversary of being a promotional municipality for minority languages and we celebrate 20 year anniversary for our world heritage Struve's meridian arc. What a year I'll be! Each celebration, opening or inauguration is not only a symbol of physical transformation but also a beacon of cultural continuity and community connection. This project also aims to support community cohesion to ensure that the city's residents, particularly those affected by the transformation, feel a sense of ownership and connection to their new surroundings through participatory cultural events.

By incorporating cultural events, performances, and installations into the inauguration of new structures, the project will create moments of reflection, celebration, and connection between the past, present and future of Kiruna. Indigenous and minority cultures will be at the forefront

SOUNDING URBAN PLACES

of many events, alongside influences from the mining community and Kiruna's diverse residents, ensuring that all cultural voices in the area are represented.

Through collaborations with European and local cultural practitioners, the project will weave the diverse cultural narratives of Kiruna into the fabric of its new urban landscape. As the city transformation in expected to continue until about 2035, the organisation, skills and creative know-how about celebrating infrastructural projects with cultural framing, will continue for many years after 2029 as a legacy of our ECoC year.

Partners and future collaborations: Kiruna municipality, Kiruna Växer, LKAB, KBAB, Kin Museum for Contemporary Art, Giron Sámi Teáhter

Timeline: 2025 – 2035 **Budget:** €€

This project brings sound artists and composers together with researchers in history, architecture and sound studies to explore sound and memory, taking citizens' experience of the transformation of the city of Kiruna as a point of departure. The approach is based on collaborative methods, engaging the local population in mapping the sonic history and present day soundscapes. With the use of a combination of surround recordings and the use of sensors to capture more fine-tuned vibration, the project engages with the sounds of Kiruna, below ground, on earth, as well as in space, in the atmosphere.

The overarching aim is to develop novel arts-based methods and to contribute to enhanced sonic perspectives in city-planning and the creation of sustainable and attractive living environments.

Sound UP (2024-25) is currently developing a series of tools for engagement with local communities in Kiruna and the Hague, Netherlands. These tools include an interactive online map, with which anyone can upload sounds linked to a certain location, and the Tracks App, developed for the creation of audio walks. But Sound Up also develops an online platform for sound studies and sound art practitioners, which will be permanently hosted by the University of Leiden. These tools and platforms will form part of the continued work in Sounding Urban Places, creating possibilities for international collaboration and dissemination of artistic and scientific outcomes.

The project also engages with the iconic clock tower by the City Hall and utilises telematic performance technologies for remote control of its carillon, and premieres new works created by the composer Anders Hultqvist and by the TCP/IP quartet, for carillon and instrumentalists including the Norrbotten chamber orchestra.

Partners and future collaborations: LTU ARC (Arts-based Research Centre), Sound Studies Centre, Leiden (NL). The Royal Conservatoire in the Hague (NL), Soundtrackcity, the Hague (NL), KLUSTER, Society for contemporary music, Norrbottensmusiken, Norrbotten chamber orchestra

Timeframe: 2025 – 2029 **Budget:** €

ENDLESS HORIZON

Budget for programme line 4.3 m Euro

In Kiruna the "endless horizon" is a metaphor for possibilities and a very concrete experience at the same time. Endless Horizon connects to the new tomorrow – our future – as well as to space and the special connection that Kiruna has to space research because the atmosphere is very close to us here. In this line, we underscore the importance of building a European future that is inclusive, collaborative, and forward-thinking, a space for culture, creativity, and connection.

In Endless Horizon Kiruna will set a new course for the transformation, as it evolves, reinvents itself in the continuous movement towards the unknown. The Endless Horizon will leave a cultural legacy that continues to inspire curiosity and innovation in a process of becoming something more than we are today.

HUMAN MACHINE CHAPTER 3

Our closing ceremony embodies the story of this special place through a three-layered universe: We move underground, we move on the surface, we move into space. The final chapter of the Human Machine trilogy takes the audience to the edge of the unknown – where art, science, and technology collide. One of the layers of Human Machine Chapter 3 is an extraordinary immersive Augmented Reality technology (AR) art experience set within the colossal structure of Arena Arctica, one of the world's largest flight hangars located in Kiruna. Here we invite renowned international artists to push the boundaries of creativity and technology, transforming the gigantic space into a portal to the future.

Kiruna has a unique connection to the space industry and has long been home to institutions Esrange Space Center and Swedish Institute of Space Physics. Human Machine Chapter 3 will weave together Kiruna's space heritage with artists and creatives to reflect on space as a cultural concept, and develop a series of performances, interpreting themes related to technology and its influence.

Partners and future collaborations: Swedavia, European Space Agency, Esrange Space Center, Swedish Institute of Space Physics, Frameless (UK) Walk the Plank (UK), Koami, The Swedish Polar Research Secretariat, Tekniska Museet, SVT.

Timeframe: 2028-2029 **Budget**: €€€

100 STAGES

The 100 Stages project will embrace Kiruna's uniqueness by creatively using its vast space to develop 100 new and unexpected performance venues across urban, rural, and natural settings. This project will invite you to experience that summer night indie-pop concert in someone's back yard, a breathtaking modern dance performance on the ski slopes, Alice in the Mine or a poetry reading on the banks of a river.

By transforming both traditional and unconventional locations into vibrant stages, the project aims to bring art, music, theatre, and performance to the public in ways that challenge the conventional idea of cultural venues. By transforming spaces like rooftops, abandoned buildings, homesteads, forests, riversides, and even industrial sites, 100 Stages will offer audiences unique cultural experiences in settings that challenge traditional boundaries.

One of such unusual spaces is the visitors' mine of the LKAB iron-ore mine located a few hundred metres below ground. It is a fantastic place for cultural events during our ECoC year, giving us the chance to develop shows and performances in a unique setting. During the years working up to 2029, different connections are made through projects like Kin Museum of Contemporary Arts 60 years anniversary after the celebrated Picasso exhibition in the visitors' mine by lending some of the pieces from the Modern Museum of Art in Stockholm that were shown here back in 1965. In collaboration with the artist Dora Garcia

NATURAL GATHERING

Barcelona, based in Oslo a new piece of art in dialogue with Picassos work, will be produced as part of the project.

100 Stages envisions a future where art is seamlessly integrated into daily life, breaking free from the confines of traditional venues. It will serve as a testbed for innovative urban experiences, creative placemaking, and cultural engagement. Through collaboration with local communities, artists, architects, and cultural institutions, the project will co-create performance spaces that are deeply connected to the environment, architecture, and history of each location.

100 Stages is the perfect foundation for smaller projects to grow during our ECoC year as it will inspire and surprise, making Kiruna a model for how cities can use their distinct characteristics to foster new cultural expressions.

Partners and future collaborations: Culture- youth- indigenous and minority associations in Kiruna and Norrbotten. Poikki Art, Hembygdsföreningar, LKAB, Limassol 2030 candidate (CY), Big Wind, Heart of Sound, Norrbottensteatern, Norrbottensmusiken, BD Pop, Kin Museum for Contemporary Art, Giron Sámi Teáhter, Tornedalsteatern, Girdit Media, Local associations for choirs, dancers and musicians and independent artists, All Things Live, Teatercentrum, Dans i Nord, Live DMA

Timeframe: 2028 – 2029 **Budget:** €€€

Natural Gathering will give everyone the opportunity to meet around the fire, share stories and memories across generations in unspoiled nature. The fireplace connects us to the earth and the flames light up the space around us – a primordial and universal feature. It is also crucial for survival in the cold. We have about 60 locations for designated fireplaces in our municipality, some maintained by the municipality, some by associations and some not at all. The different fireplaces and wind shelters will be redesigned to help spark conversations, create memories together and passing on stories around the fire. The character of the different fireplaces is inspired by various fire-making techniques, drawing from both local Sámi and Tornedalian and of other European traditions. It's a powerful idea of creating places that encourage community and reflection, in a time when we are often preoccupied with fast-paced tech or stressful life puzzles.

At Mount Ädnamvaara, the trail leading up to the peak will be redirected due to expanding mining in the area. This is a great opportunity to use creative thinking as the new artistic wind shelters and fireplaces will be built along the new path and accessibility to nature will be improved by constructing new boardwalks and trails.

The building of the light-art installation Boreal Crown, will create a holistic experience that combines art, nature and human connection. Inspired by aurora research from the late 1800s, this project pays homage to Karl Selim Lemström's experiments, where an unexplained light phenomenon was observed, symbolising a miracle. Today, this beacon of light represents hope and innovation amidst the challenges of the climate crisis. The idea is to create observation sites with overnights accommodation – small sculptural cabins, resembling a telescope strategically positioned at key fireplace sites. Here the artwork and the light phenomenon can be viewed from afar during the winter months. They blend art, science, and accommodation, providing a unique experience akin to the setup of Walter de Maria's Lightning Field in New Mexico.

The project is expected to begin as early as 2025 and will continue all the way through and beyond the European Capital of Culture year. A more workshop-intensive phase will take place in 2028, with national and European designers and architects on site to produce and shape the places in order to have them ready for use by our ECoC year.

Partners and future collaborations:
Warm in the Winter, Arctic Design Centre, Hembygdsföreningar (Homesteads), Kiruna Municipality, Bigert & Bergström, Swedish Institute of Space Physics, ArkNat, Institute of Urban Culture Bielsko-Biala (PL) Poikki Art and Design Camp.

Timeframe: 2025 – 2029 **Budget**: €€

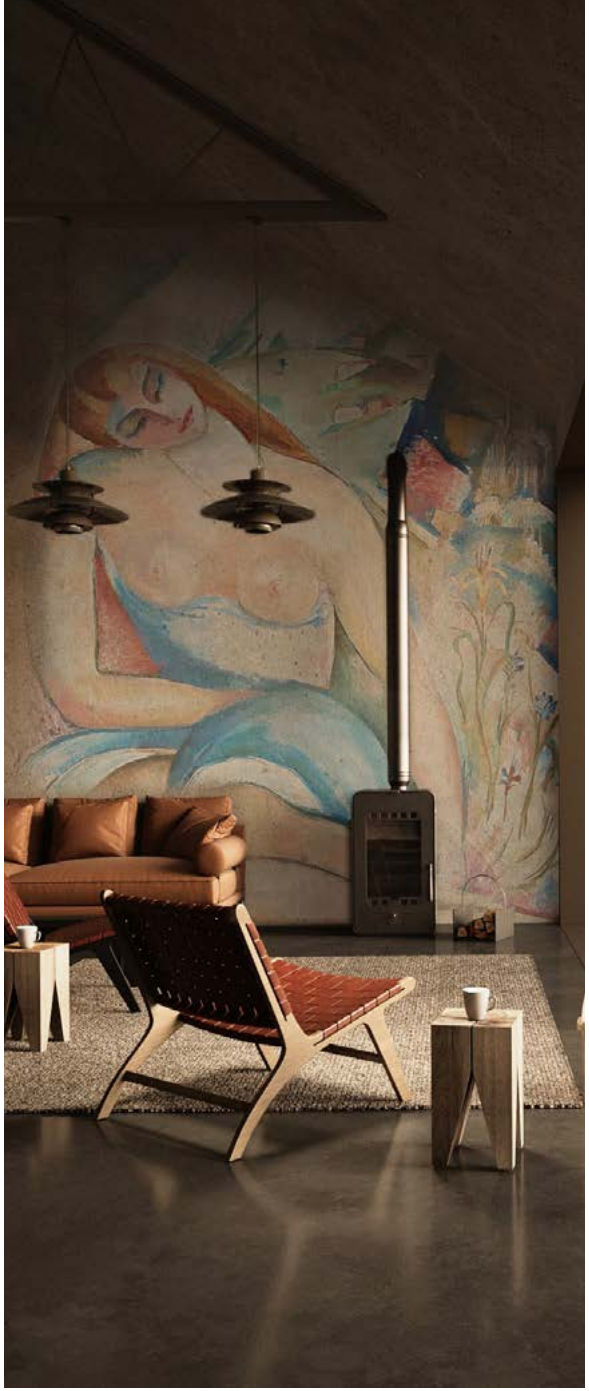
MAMA – MODERN ART MUSEUM IN ABISKO

This new modern museum is set to open in 2027 and will be located 90 km west of Kiruna, in the mountain village Abisko. It is dedicated to the expressionist artist Per Leander-Engström and is privately funded by the Leander-Engström family. The 1,200 sqm museum will feature a permanent collection highlighting Leander and his contemporaries, including Helmer Osslund, Sigrid Hjertén, Isaac Grünewald, and Henri Matisse. The museum will also host a dynamic programme of new exhibitions, allowing modern and contemporary art to interact and create a comprehensive picture of artistic expressions in the Arctic.

It was here in Abisko, where Per Leander-Engström, a student of Henri Matisse, fell in love with the stunning landscapes, vibrant culture, and enchanting light. His time in Paris equipped him with new expressionistic techniques, enabling him to reinterpret the Arctic landscape in groundbreaking ways. Leander served as a bridge between Europe and the Arctic, introducing European artistic influences to the region. Today, his works are proudly displayed in institutions such as Moderna Museet and the National Museum in Stockholm.

A 250 sqm room within MAMA will host digital exhibitions and immersive experiences. The museum will also feature spaces accommodating both corporate functions and community gatherings. To enhance the visitor experience, the facility will include accommodations, a restaurant, a bar, and a café, all seamlessly integrated into the art centre. Partners and future collaborations: The Leander-Engström family, Creative Europe, National Museum, Moderna Museet

Timeframe: 2025-2029 **Budget**: €€€



MODERN ART MUSEUM IN ABISKO

ARCTIC FIRE

Arctic Fire is an international youth cultural festival that will be one of the big new events for Kiruna's ECoC year. This innovative festival invites young people from around the world to gather in Kiruna for an unforgettable cultural exchange. Centred around themes of urban transformation, nature, climate change, and creativity, the festival will host a series of hands-on workshops focused on sustainability in the arts and the relationship between culture and the environment, exploring how young people can lead and be the change-makers in sustainable innovation.

Each day will warp-up with campfire sessions that bring together young artists, performers, and storytellers from around the world to share stories, music, and ideas. These campfires will be the heart of the festival, evoking an ancient tradition of human connection through the simple act of gathering around a fire. Land art installations will be created using natural, biodegradable materials, leaving no trace after the festival ends.

Arctic Fire will be a model for sustainable event planning, ensuring that the festival aligns with Kiruna's commitment to preserving its natural environment. Beyond the environmental impact, the festival will leave a cultural legacy by establishing Kiruna as a hub for international youth collaboration and artistic innovation. The relationships and creative networks formed before or during the festival will continue to grow, with future festivals and cultural exchanges being planned long after the ECoC year. Arctic Fire will become an enduring feature of Kiruna's cultural landscape, continuing beyond the ECoC year as an annual gathering where young artists from around the world come to explore new ideas, collaborate across borders, and connect with nature in ways that inspire both their work and their vision for a sustainable future.

Partners and future collaborations: Culture, youth, indigenous and minority associations in Kiruna and Norrbotten. Limassol 2030 candidate (CY) Lublin 2029 (PL), Bodø 2024, Oulu 2026 (FI), Tartu 2024 (EE), Budweis 2028 (CZ), Kortrijk 2030 candadite (BE), Tornedalsrådet, Youth Cinema Network, Norrbottensmusiken, Norrbottensteatern, School of Culture, Jillat Sámi dans center, Tornedalstatern, Giron Sámi Teáhter, Kiruna municipality.

Timeframe: 2028 – 2029 **Budget**: €€

CULTURE KNOCKS ON YOUR DOOR

This bold and intimate theatre project brings culture directly into people's homes. In this project, the audience doesn't have to come to theatre – the theatre comes to them. The line between the private and the production will blur, and the spectator will become a part of the narrative and setting. Each performance is unique and tailored to the environment and individual setting, inviting a level of personal interaction and improvisation rarely experienced in traditional theatre. With no two performances alike, actors will adapt to the specifics of each home, making the spectator not only a witness but an active participant in the unfolding narrative.

This project is designed to open up culture to those who might not have easy access to traditional cultural venues—whether due to distance, mobility challenges, or simply a desire for a more personal encounter with the arts. It invites community members to share their space, offer a cup of coffee, and open up for a customised theatrical experience.

This project will be held in different languages and especially promoting our minority languages, giving the audience a possibility to take part in culture in their own language.

Theatre institutions will create together with practitioners, independent groups and institutions from other minority cultures of Europe, collaborate with local amateur groups and be part of the Dream Summer Job.

A project where young people get to work with professionals in the creative and cultural industry during summer. This will be a way to encourage children and youths to learn a minority language, to use and practice it as a natural part of our lives – a way to show that despite our different pronunciations, we are quite the same underneath.

Partners and future collaborations: Giron Sámi Teáther, Tornedalsteatern, Norrbottensteatern, Riksteatern, with theatres across Europe like the Slovensko Stalno Gledališče (Slovene minority theatre in Trieste, IT), Hungarian Theatre in Cluj (RO), Roma Theatre TKO Köln (DE), IETM International Network for Performing Arts.

Timeframe: 2029 **Budget**: €€

ARCHITECT ARKS

The tradition of the ark – movable houses on sleds – has the potential to offer an exciting form of accommodation for both Kiruna residents and international visitors. By inviting European architects to design and build their interpretation of this typology, a collection of arks will emerge, ranging from traditional wooden cottages to more modern, innovative versions.

Arks have long been a part of Kiruna's winter life. The ark usually has a heater, a little cooker and a bed for two, making it a warm cosy shelter when the cold wind is roaring outside. A hatch in the floor of the ark makes it possible to catch your fish through a hole in the thick ice, seeing the char lure in the crystal-clear water. From March to May, ice-fishing competitions and big events on large frozen lakes are a big deal to the local community and something we'd like to share with international visitors. The ECoC Arks will be produced with craftspeople and artists, turning the little hut into a small-scale cinema, music scene or library, adding more cultural experiences to the gatherings. These ECoC arks will be a legacy and a resource to be used well after 2029 by the ark associations..

Partners and future collaborations: Warm in the Winter, Arctic Design Centre, ArkDes, Poikki Art and Design Camp, LTU, Eveliina Sarapää (FI), Joar Nango (NO).

Timeframe: 2027 – 2029 **Budget:** €€

KATE HEARN AT KULTURA KIRUNA

KULTURA KIRUNA

Kultura Kiruna is an established cultural and heritage festival with an international outlook. The festival serves as a platform for local talent, offering exposure and resources to help them thrive. With a diverse programme spanning music, theatre, film, literature, visual arts, and community projects, Kultura Kiruna showcases the region's creativity, blending pride in local traditions with a push toward innovation and contemporary expression.

Two standout events include the live, digitally broadcast talk show Norrbotten Talks and The World's Largest Cultural Walk on Skis, where thousands walk or ski through the city, experiencing various cultural performances while celebrating the freedom of cultural life.

As an umbrella organisation, Kultura Kiruna handles marketing and logistical coordination. This enables smaller cultural groups, which may lack resources, to access a wider audience. The festival's promotional reach already attracts regional and national attention, and by integrating into Kiruna's ECoC 2029 programme, it aims to expand internationally. Workshops, seminars, and artist talks during the festival provide local artists and organisations with valuable opportunities to refine their skills and broaden their networks. The aim is to build a new creative sector that elevates local culture and fosters collaboration with national and international partners.

Partners and future collaborations: Kiruna Växer, Arctic Light Filmfestival, Filmpool Nord, Kin Museum of Contemporary Art, Icehotel, Kiruna Lapland, Giron Sámi Teáhter, Kiruna Municipality, Spill, Camp Ripan, Nutti Sámi Siida, Aurora Culture and Congress centre, Live Nation, United Stage, Lapplands Gymnasium, BD Pop, Norrbotten Region, LKAB, Viscaria, Sparbanken Nord, Youth Cinema Network.

Timeframe: 2025 – 2029 **Budget:** €€

ARNE BERGH AND JENS THOMS IVARSSON
POIKKI ART AND DESIGN CAMP

Q7.

How we will choose events for our cultural programme

Learning from previous ECoC cities, we understand the importance of keeping the programme open for new things to develop during the years leading up to 2029. We see how networking and exchanges will contribute to our year, and how they will be the beginning of a strong movement onwards. It is our most important mission to create not only a moving cultural programme, but a momentum and rich future for the young people living in Kiruna and Europe today.

The cultural programme will be developed by the Artistic Director, Cultural Manager and City Transformation Manager, but the Artistic Director has the final say for the overall cultural programme for 2029, making sure we follow the artistic vision. Within the artistic team, answering to the Artistic Director, we have coordinators, curators and producers for our flagship and in-house productions, but also specific positions requiring cultural knowledge from both Sami and Tornedalian perspectives. These different positions will be of special importance to make sure the entire programme has a clear indigenous and minority representation. The same goes for the Youth Producer, whose role will be to maintain a youth perspective, integrate our young community in the programme and encourage initiatives from youths.

When selecting and fine-tuning the projects for the final programme, the ECoC team will assess the projects according to their level of European dimension, artistic vision and professionalism, community inclusion and capacity building. We will furthermore look at whether the project has a minority perspective and young inclusion. Not all projects will have to adhere to every criterion, but the ECoC artistic team needs to make sure all the criteria are met in the overall programme.

We aim to build competence in the audience

Some open calls will be carried out, for example for the Arctistic Residency, Take a Bite at Nature and 100 Stages to fill the ideas with specific content and people. The producer or manager in charge of the specific project will be involved in the selection of the entries from the open calls and will make the day-to-day decisions together with the project partners related to the implementation.

As a support and to maintain local outreach, an external Cultural Advisory Board will be assisting the Artistic Director with input to the cultural programme, making sure the programme is connected to and supported by the different local and regional institutions.

The Cultural Advisory Board will be constituted of representatives from local and regional institutions, organisations and independent cultural operators.

The ECoC organisation will produce the flagship events, co-produce different projects but market and promote every project listed and connected to Kiruna 2029. Most of the projects will be produced and managed by the local and regional partners enlisted for each project. The partner will then be responsible for their individual project budget, staff, timeframe and outcome with support by the ECoC Kiruna 2029 organisation. A lot of what we have written here has been informed by our exchanges with the designated ECoC partners.

Q8.

How our cultural programme combines heritage and traditional arts with experimental expressions

Building towards our ECoC year, Kiruna 2029 wants to set a new cultural standard by highlighting the artistic quality and diversity that we can gain, create, and share in Kiruna. With new artistic expressions and international dimensions, we aim to build competence in the audience, young and old, to join the cultural life and experiences more often. The cultural programme will combine the richness of the local heritage with bold, experimental forms of expression.

Kiruna's strong roots in Sami and Tornedalian culture, local traditions and closeness to nature will be the foundations of the cultural programme. This includes honouring traditional crafts and duodji (Sami handicraft), storytelling, and jojk (Sami vocal traditions), which have been passed down through generations, and it means that we will host cultural events using nature as our venue as we explore the programme line **Seeds of Knowledge** and projects like **Practicing our Knowledge**

The city's industrial tradition, rooted in mining and space exploration, gives us an intriguing mix of research and technological development in space, climate and industry that lend themselves to being translated into cultural expressions, and help us explore creative ways to drive new cultural expressions. Our project **Behind the Gates** tells the story of women in industry through the decades giving voice to both traditional and industrial narratives whilst the project **Natural Gathering** highlights space, research and history through art.

In the project **Take a Bite at Nature** we invite chefs and artists to reinvent traditional culinary experiences in innovative ways. Connecting nature and what it gives us in reimagining traditional dishes merging food, art and storytelling will create immersive experiences where visitors not only will taste the region's culinary heritage but also experience it as part of a larger cultural narrative.

In Kiruna, we have an unexpected and highly valuable mix of traditional crafts and unusual materials close at hand, like reindeer antlers and fur, wood, magnetite, snow, ice and not least materials left from the city transformation, which will spring new ideas and technological opportunities – for example in the project **Making it Visual**. By incorporating traditional art forms with modern technology, environmental sustainability, and international collaborations, Kiruna will offer a unique cultural journey for artists, curators, producers and audiences.

The young audience and creators will take this on in projects like **Arctic Fire** and **Digital Art Room**, and the School of Culture with their frontier work in digital making and programming will be a lead actor to support these actions. This strategy not only preserves the region's identity but also positions it as a hub for contemporary cultural innovation, making Kiruna a new cultural destination on the European stage.

As the big municipality we are and never knowing which health hazard will lock us down next, we need to make sure that the audience can follow the programme, regardless of where people are. **Digital Art Space** will make sure we follow the digital development that constantly takes huge leaps forward.

New and experimental expressions will fuse with local traditions. Kiruna's programme will push boundaries using digital art, augmented reality (AR), soundscapes, and experimental performance spaces in projects like **Making it Visual, Sounding Urban Places, Human Machine – Chapter 3**, the immersive augmented reality (AR) art experience that will constitute our closing event, or the 250sqm space in the **MAMA Modern Art Museum in Abisko** where visitors can immerse themselves in digital versions of the world's encyclopaedia of visual art.

Projects like **100 Stages, Kultura Kiruna** and **Natural Gatherings** will take advantage of the region's natural landscapes, transforming them into living stages where innovative art forms meet the local environment. **Open up to Culture** envisions positioning Kiruna as a global example of how urban transformation can honour cultural heritage and promote sustainable, people-centred development.

MARKUS ÖHRN
KORPELARÖRELSEN
INSTITUTET / KONSTFRÄMJANDET NORRBOTTEN

We will use our local materials as universal language and let craft, food, music and art become the cultural glue and channels to communicate cultural heritage in new and contemporary ways to a local and European audience. **Eadnámet** is one of the projects where traditional and contemporary art is combined, through indigenous Sami perspectives, relating to questions of land acknowledgement and Sami ways of tracelessly moving across these lands for millennia. Cultural traditions, from all our minority groups, have enormous value and we want them to be a big and visual part of the programme to contribute to inclusion and shared knowledge.

With the help of the European Capital of Culture, we can re-establish physical meeting places in projects like **Kiruneum, Practising our Knowledge** and **Architect Arks** where the communities can gather, share cultural experiences and co-create with artists to carry cultural heritage, traditions, and history forward into the future. It's a way to rekindle the desire to participate in our community and in culture, something we have leaned on over generations to live in what is seen by many as remote and harsh outposts.

Our programme aims to promote quality, artistic renewal and innovation and at the same time encourage a living cultural heritage that is preserved, lived and carried on through generations.

Q9.

Involving our local artists and cultural organisations

From the first stumbling steps that were initiated after the municipality decided that Kiruna will apply to become a European Capital of Culture, it has been important to involve local artists, cultural organisations and associations. It is for and with them we do this, making Kiruna a creative place for creative people and boost creative and cultural jobs. As described in Q7 our plan is to include different forms of collaboration, and the projects will be driven by both external and internal producers. A strategy to secure Kiruna can manage such a big programme, but also to build our capacity for the long term, by learning and widening our ideas and artistic languages from European colleagues.

Concept group

Early on a concept group of local artists and creative people of different genders, ages, geographical representation, cultural backgrounds and cultural fields gathered and developed the concept together with the team. We rarely make a clear cut between those who create professionally and non-professionally. This is why our concept group consists of artists and people from cultural institutions but also from cultural associations and minority groups – and sometimes all in one person. The concept group has helped spread the information and the work behind the application to others in the communities and they are our core ambassadors.

The concept group's task has been to fine-tune the concept title, the cultural and artistic outline and artistic vision of the programme. Since preselection artists Björn Petersson Thuuri and Maria Ragnestam from the concept group have strengthened the bidding team, to complement it with greater artistic knowledge and networks for redefining and implementing the artistic programme and vision. The group and our artistic team have built a strong and compelling programme.

Meetings and dialouges

We have held open meetings and individual meetings on request with associations, organisaitions, tourism sector, artists and creative people leading to one-on-one meetings and dialogues. On our webpage we had an open application to fill in, for projects connecting to our concept. In total 170 project ideas have been handed in, not all from local organisations and artist, but many of them. Some of the ideas have informed projects like Arctic Fire, Take a Bite at Nature, Kiruneum and Behind the Gates. All of the proposals are being saved in our project pool, hoping to get a chance of dipping our fishing rod pulling out projects along the way to 2029 and beyond.

Regional networks and meetings

In the region we have reached out for participation and involvement of regional artists, institutions and organisations through existing networks with the help from Norrbotten Region, Tornedalsrådet (Torne Vally Council) and Verdde, talking about the ECoC action at KulturSápmi. From these meetings the ECoC team has gathered information about needs in the creative sector: more job opportunities in the region and more connections and meeting places where they can meet and co-create.

We've been in dialogue with all the major artistic and creative institutions in Kiruna and Norrbotten and asked them if and how they wanted to join our movement. Some have added to the overall text of this application, others have been more involved in co-creating the artistic programme. Conversations with local cultural institutions, organisation and association working within our municipality will continue to be carried out during the build-up years and all the way to 2029, if Kiruna is awarded the title. A structure to continue will be set out for legacy following 2029. Moving together with care.

We start 2025 by celebrating Kiruna's 125 years anniversary, moving the church and 25 years as an administrative municipality for minority languages – knowledge built on practice! As a capacity building measure in the run-up towards 2029, our festivals will receive support for the anniversary programme in 2025 – so that they can prepare and up their game for the ECoC year.

LIV AIRA
ÀJTTEGA

Practicing our knowledge to go far beyond business as usual, become stronger, more creative and more international. We have started liaising with the festival operators on how they can best be supported, developed, implement new ambitious content during the ECoC ramp-up years and participate in our volunteer and ambassador programmes.

Our application process has not stretched over years, but during the time we had we have been 100% dedicated, both head and heart, always walking the talk. Countless meetings, dialogues, information exchanges and fruitful discussion around the concept and the project were giving everyone the feeling that not only the city is moving. In Kiruna things move fast, it's a roller-coaster of emotions and actions. Working on a bid for European Capital of Culture in an ongoing city transformation, industrial transition and all that follows in its wake, resembled sitting in the eye of a tornado. But we have seen that it has been a way of connecting, dreaming and actually starting to talk about the cultural revolution that could be our future.

Something good is on the move, and it will not end here.

Q10.

Our cooperation with local artists and cultural organisations

As soon as our movement began, we have been supported, first by a small group of local artists and cultural organisations, but the support steadily expanded as the curiosity and engagement kicked in. We have been as open and transparent during the bidding process as we possibly could to earn trust, engage and involve the local culture sector to build a strong long-lasting relationship.

Kin Museum of Contemporary Art is located at the heart of the city hall in Kiruna. The director of the museum, Maria Lind, with her broad network makes sure that the museum based in the Arctic region weaves together the local, regional, national and international aspect by working with both well-known and emerging artists. As co-producers in the projects of Kiruneum, Behind the Gates, Open Up to Culture, Arctic Fire and Kultura Kiruna, Maria Lind and her team will provide exhibitions, workshops, lectures and talks where art and curation touch on the major issues of our time, including raw material extraction, indigenous and minority rights and climate change.

Region Norrbotten's cultural institutions and operators have contributed to a deepened network of contacts within and outside Sweden's borders and will be co-producers for some of the project like Kiruneum, Eadnámet, Behind the Gates, Sounding Urban Places, Culture Knocks on your Door, and planning for their own projects that will emerge along the way.

Konstfrämjandet Norrbotten (Peoples Movement for Art Promotion Norrbotten), is based in Kiruna and works to make contemporary art accessible all over Norrbotten and strengthen the art and the artist's role in society. **Luleåbiennalen** is an international art biennial taking place in the northernmost region of Sweden. Initiated in 1991, it is the oldest art biennial in Scandinavia. **Verdde** is a nomadic art institution working to increase the visibility of Sami people and contributing to the inclusion of Sami perspectives into the making of history through contemporary Sami art. These mobile art institutions are led by curator and artistic director Maria Ragnestam and bring international networks of artists, cultural practitioners and curators. They will produce and be co-producers in the projects, for example in Practicing our Knowledge, Kiruneum, Eadnámet, Making it Visual and Arctistic Residency.

The Foundation for Object Care in Kiruna works to ensure that cultural heritage is preserved and provided for current and future generations. They will contribute to the projects Kiruneum and Open Up to Culture through advice and guidance in their area of assignment. They will inaugurate their new premises and may be able to participate in other celebrations as cultural expressions within our area of activity.

Jillat – Sámi Dance Centre and dancer Liv Aira contribute to integrating contemporary Sami dance and performing arts as partners in the project Eadnámet, Behind the Gates, Arctistic Residency and Arctic Fire. Jillat invites dancers and other artist from around the world to their special premises. Their artistic expertise will give rise to deep cultural exchanges, workshops and their residency programme will focus on dance, circus and performing arts in Sápmi, which strengthens the projects in relation to the Sami culture in Norrbotten.

Giron Sámi Teáhter's mission is to produce professional performing arts based on Sami culture and to promote the Sami languages. The theatre is led by Åsa Simma and based in Kiruna, but is in constant motion since the productions tour the country. **Tornedalsteatern** is also a touring theatre based in Pajala, with the mission to highlight Meänkieli and the culture of the Torne Valley through performing arts. Both are potential partners of the project Culture Knocks on your Door as co-producers. And in other festivals like Kultura Kiruna and Open Up to Culture where their performances will be part of the programme.

Take a Bite at Nature, Open Up to Culture, Arctic Fire, 100 stages and Kultura Kiruna, all projects that will be implemented by helping hands and involvement by local cultural associations, artists, Homesteads, tourism entrepreneurs, Aurora Culture and Congress and the municipality. By adding from our pool of projects that's been handed in, open calls and commissioned work, we will build this programme together.

It will be hard to name everyone sharing ideas, conversations and inputs, but we would like to thank everyone who has given their time, enthusiasm and shared their thoughts to build a strong case for 2029. Here we name some of the professional and non-professional artist and creatives, who have contributed to the cultural program and been involved in different ways, they stand for everyone and all people who have put their heart, their hands and their minds to this. We are grateful to everyone.

Arne Bergh
Britta Marakatt-Labba
Christel Elsayah
Daniel Stålnacke
Daniel Åberg
Emma Karlsson
Emma Kiviniemi
Ellika Shilling
Ellen B Dalbakk
Erika Stöckel
Elda Oreto
Fanny Kivimäki
Fredrik Österling
Ida-Maria Svonni
Janne Sirniö
Jens Thoms Ivarsson
Jesper Dahlström-Kawakami
Johan Lans
Káren-Ann Hurri
Kate Hearn
Lena Kriström
Lena Rydström
Lena Ylipää
Roger Bergström
Sara Rova
Serigne Dial
Siri Skogstad Berntsen
Sven Keskitalo
Viktor Björnström
Yvonne Fuchs
Wilma Saga Persson
Åsa Andersson

3 EUROPEAN DIMENSION

Q11. a) and b)

Our shared cultural diversity in Europe, current European themes, mutual understanding between European citizens

In Europe the Arctic north is usually not seen as contributing to European cultural diversity too much. It is rather our minerals and our nature that make us interesting. The European Capital of Culture is an opportunity to refine our cultural gems and share with Europe just how much diversity we have under our Arctic cap.

Minority culture brings major diversity
Kiruna municipality is the home to several national cultural minorities. Sami people, Tornedalians and Swedish Finns. Embedded in the Tornedalian culture, people identify as Tornedalian, Kven and Lantalaiset. The Sami people are the only indigenous people acknowledged in Europe and Sami people and Tornedalians have been living together in our northern area for centuries, shaping our collective identity. This rich cultural diversity comprises several languages like the Sami languages, Finnish and Meänkieli as official languages within our municipality.

Our history is sadly a part of the colonialism and oppression of the indigenous and minority cultures that spans the millennia. During early 2024 a Truth and Reconciliation Report for the Tornedalian, Kven and Lantalaiset people was published, stating the oppression and abuse that the minorities experienced from the Swedish state in the early 19th century. Another Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the Sami people is currently being conducted and is planned to be presented in the end of 2025. A new law passed in Sweden in 2022 and includes municipalities since 2024, stating that the Sami community must be consulted in matters with special significance affecting or involving Sami culture, heritage or traditions.

This new law and reports have naturally infused this candidacy and highlighted the importance

of cultural awareness and sensitivity in handling different cultural identities and expression. Therefore, the cultural programme and ECoC organisation will not single out Sami, Tornedalian, Kven, Lantalaiset or Swedish Finnish cultural expressions as separate programme lines or specific projects. By ensuring representation from the different cultural groups in our ECoC organisation, we integrate our cultural minorities as a natural way of setting up events.

With our ECoC process we believe we can strengthen the many cultural identities within our community, show similarities, create understanding, empathy, respect and pride of our cultural diversity. We also want to show Europe how this cultural diversity is part of our shared cultural diversity in Europe. The rich heritage and competence of cultural minorities and indigenous people is a practice-based knowledge. You do, you learn, you share. All minority groups in Europe share this heritage of practical knowledge, with the fear of losing the skills of different crafts, stories, language and traditions if they are not shown, practiced, and passed on from generation to generation. Projects like **Practice our Knowledge** and **Take a Bite at Nature** will invite Europeans and locals to share respectful spaces for minority cultures so that everybody can learn about different creative languages, traditions and heritage, to cultivate different artforms in contemporary and traditional ways, both in our local community and on the European scene.
In addition to our local cultural richness, we are also constantly experiencing the vast cultural diversity that residents from all over Europe and the world who come to Kiruna to work for a few years or to stay permanently, bring into the city**. Transbordering Art** and **Arctistic Residency** are two projects that offer direct cultural exchanges and a way to work remotely in an Arctic environment for a while, sharing skills and ideas. With a project like **100 Stages** the ECoC creates more opportunities for exchange between locals and new citizens whilst the project **Kultura Kiruna** will invite residents to co-create interventions in their own neighbourhood with artists bringing their foreign perspective.

The industrial, the geopolitical and the rural
We share the fact that our city was born as an industrial city, with many other places in Europe. But whilst most places in Europe de-industrialise, we are going the opposite way. We have a number of large mineral assets in Europe. Kiruna is located right in the heart of one. The rich mineral field of Malmfälten, the Orefield. Mining has been the core of our identity and livelihood for the last 125 years. Europe needs Kiruna to be at the forefront of innovation, research and development, taking the lead in sustainable mining production on the global market. Our innovative ways of mining, using AI and robots, plays a big role in the current European Green Deal and the shift to fossil free production.
We have found many similarities regarding our industrial culture with Chemnitz in Germany and with Katowice in Poland. For example, the struggle for cultural visibility in places with a tough industrial heart. In places like ours – where the mindset is traditionally of pioneering, entrepreneurial and money-making, we have a hard time making the softer values of culture and arts visible. In the project **Behind the Gates**, we focus on women in the industry. Being a female miner or industrial worker in Europe in the past, present and future. Big industry and the Arctic's rich resources bring many interests and stakeholders into the picture. Here in Kiruna, we want to work with this to ensure the Arctic is a place where we all put in, rather than just taking out.

Like our Arctic friends in Bodø and Oulu, a long-term impact is to broaden and soften up the image of the Arctic. We want to show that the Arctic brings richness to Europe not only in terms of minerals and wealth but also in culture and diversity.

The industrial activities in Kiruna greatly influence what goes on in the rural landscape around. Like almost everywhere in Europe, people leave the countryside to move to the cities. Tourism, production and mining are the main job opportunities in our villages. But we are in constant lack of teachers, nurses and care workers. Reaching out to our heartlands is one of our most important goals. We said earlier that we only have few cathedrals of culture, so we want to create communities of culture with the **Natural Gathering** project and utilise Homesteads as a part of the project **100 Stages**.

A new city
Our urban transformation and redevelopment of urban space makes a unique example in Europe, but we have also discovered many links to partner cities around Europe. In Chemnitz, Germany they have transformed land from previous coal-mining areas into parkland some decades ago – just like we are currently doing with our City-Mine Park in Kiruna. The moving and transforming of an entire airport base close to the centre of Bodø, Norway, opens the city up for a growing population, new cultural life and urban identity – themes we share with them.

In Kiruna we talk a lot about "life between the houses", referring to the cultural and social life we now need to bring to our new city. Meeting the ECoC team from Lemesos, Cyprus, they used the very same expression to talk about their urban situation of new pricy apartment blocks and large properties being built in their city, creating a new type of demography and identity, pushing out a creative community due to high prices. This is exactly the story in Kiruna, where grass-root communities and associations are highly affected by the city relocation process. We see this as a crucial and common issue right across Europe. Gentrification is pushing up rents, pushing out the informal, grass-roots and creative communities, no matter whether you are in the in the frozen North or in the Eastern Mediterranean.

We want to use the ECoC process to provide a positive influence so that creative and people-centred placemaking is brought into the heart of our redevelopment process. Meeting places, creativity and an open environment where people feel welcome and safe are the most important goals for our city transformation. Through conversation with the network Trans Europe Halles we have gained a better view on good examples of how to transform abandoned or industrial sites into cultural hot spots, whilst our projects **Open up to Culture** and **Making it Visual** bring us closer to our urban landscape.

Digital and AI agility
European society has moved towards a digital everyday life, and AI technology is progressing at the speed of light. Whilst only 55% of the European population has at least basic digital skills, in our rural and sparsely populated areas this skillset has to be much higher in order to experience and interact with life in general – from healthcare to opportunities to live, work, connect to cultural and social life, produce art and showcase it to the world.

Out of pure necessity, our digital strategy spans widely across multiple fields of action of the European Capital of Culture and beyond. From workspaces at the iron ore mine where using AI and robots are pivotal to the shift to fossil free industry essential to the European Green Deal – to using artificial intelligence for gathering, sorting, and evaluating data in our ECoC Monitoring and Evaluation plans.

The coming years in the run-up toward 2029 will play a massive role in how Europe positions itself in the race, and much of it depends on how digitally savvy our communities will be.

What better place than to start with the education of the youngest? The School of Culture (Kulturskolan) in Kiruna is leading the way in programming and AI development in Sweden alongside music, art and dance education. A plan for working closer between the School of Culture and primary schools is part of the Cultural Strategy. Through the European Digital Museum for Youth Collaboration, the School of Culture and their European network partners will collaborate with young people in Europe.

AI may help us provide cultural experiences to a European and international audience without requiring everyone to travel to Kiruna. Through the project **Digital Art Room** anyone anywhere can follow the Kiruna 2029 programme through digital events. And in **Sounding Urban Places** telematic tools give you a chance to play live with musicians all over Europe simultaneously. During the selection phase we have developed projects and actions to up our game in the digital sphere. Projects like the **Human Machine chapter 3, Making it Visual** or the dedicated space in the **MAMA** for digital exhibitions and immersive experiences are all part of the approach on enhancing digital skills and opening up endless horizons.

In a faraway land...
It's still a deeply embedded feeling that we are in the European periphery and that Europe is something far away. This candidacy process has, however, already lit a few new European stars in our sky and we have room for many more. We are Arctic Europe, Northern tip-Europe, part of a large system. We wish to shift the idea of being a northern solitude and strengthening the connection of feeling like Europeans, with colleagues and friends all over the continent.

Q11. c) and d)
Cooperations with European artists, operators, and cities. Specific examples of planned European and international cooperations

The Movement has started, and within a short time we have already established contacts and reached out to European corporations and transnational partnerships. Eyes are on Kiruna for many reasons, so for being such a small city our Movement has travelled before us and the enthusiasm and curiosity that has been lit in conversations about collaborations, partners and exchanges has been fruitful. We are depending on established and new contacts to reach more European artists, curators and producers. Therefore, strong ECoC networks and platforms like **Culture Next** and **Creative Europe networks** and platforms can be a way to supply institutional partners and open up partnerships within the local communities in many areas.

One example is the cooperation with the network **Trans Europe Halles,** where their experience and good examples from more than 40 countries in community-driven transformation of abandoned or industrial sites to cultural hot spots, will be crucial for us in the process of the TGA, Tuollavaara Gruva, an old mining and disused industrial area, making our Kiruneum come to life and in our reach for creative hubs to grow in our communities.

The Swedish part of the **North European office** and the **NSPA-network (Northern Sparsely Populated Areas)** aim to raise awareness of the common issues and circumstances facing these regions within EU institutions. They can help to build a positive aura around Kiruna and Northern Sweden in Brussels and contribute with European contacts, networks and insight into European issues and connections to Kiruna and Norrbotten. A network of contacts and collaboration to build on during the process ahead.

In October 2024, all the **European ambassadors based in Stockholm,** and those of EU candidate countries, met in Kiruna and we had the honour of meeting and presenting our ECoC bid to them This was a great opportunity to build contacts with previous and future ECoC cities – especially through the **ambassadors from Serbia, Hungary, Portugal, Moldova, North Macedonia, Ireland and Slovenia.** They were all eager to be partners in some of our ECoC events and help develop some projects with their national institutes and artists.

Closer to our home turf we are involved in the **Torne Valley Council,** connecting Sweden, Finland and Norway along the borders. The council works to improve the framework conditions for cross-border employment – business, culture and infrastructure. One of the ideas included in the 100 Stages project, is an folklore music event in the Torne Valley area, stengthening traditional music making. Through the council we also got in contact with the **N.O.P.E performance network**, who developed the Transbordering Art project. Thansk to the councils' network we have made contacts with other areas and countries separated by rivers in Europe, which we intend to develop further.

What is happening in Kiruna attracts professional groups from many countries, and helps us build networks, capacity and knowledge. For example, an ongoing collaboration between the **Departments of Architecture and Design and of Computer Engineering of the Politecnico di Torino, Italy,** will be developed further to create a digital tool for residents and visitors to visualise the complex urban process of moving a city, work in progress for our Kiruneum.

Another example is the next **TICCIH, The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage Congress** that will be held in Kiruna in August 2025. The congress themes will range from issues regarding sustainability, inclusion and colonialism to future generations, popular culture and AI. In connection with the conference, the project Målkonflikter: Allt ljus på Kiruna (Conflicting Goals: All Lights on Kiruna) and Tekniska museet will produce an exhibition linked to Kiruna and a lecture series that will be given at the library. A good example on how to implement our conference programme and build capacity.

This also links to the project Visions in the North, inspired by the **EU's New European Bauhaus** initiative, which aims to encourage architects, designers, engineers, creators, artists, researchers, students and others to take on the challenge of creating beautiful, sustainable and inclusive living environments. The first round being done in 2021-2022 focused on the TGA area. In the second round for Visions in the North a team is currently working in the village Svappavaara, about 35 km east of Kiuna. More about TGA and Visioner in the North in Q25.

When we look for curators and producers for Kiruna2029 we will take into account their experience with working internationally and their networks and links to international institutions and artists. We need to broaden our network and widen our eyes to European integration in the culture sector. Having said that, Giron Sámi Teáhter, Icehotel, Jillat Sámi Dance Centre, Kin Museum for Contemporary Art, Konstfrämjandet Norrbotten, Norrdans, Tornedalsteatern and Norrbotten Region's culture institutions **all have their own international artistic networks and shared projects.** Being a part of the ECoC process, the organisations will have the opportunity to strengthen and deepen the European dimension and collaborations.

Through projects carried out by Kin Museum for Contemporary Art in Kiruna during the years leading up to Kiruna 2029, they are planning to work with artists like **Geir Tore Holm (NO), Marysia Lewandowska (PL/UK) and Mikhail Tolmachev (DE), Olivia Pender (UK), Åsa Sonjasdotter (DE) and Joar Nango (NO) and Dora Garcia (ES).**

The projects Making it Visual and Arctistic Residence will work to reach international artist in collaboration with **Iaspis/ Konstnärsnämnden (The Swedish Arts Grants Committee), ResArtist (AU), Acme Artist Studios (UK), Transartist (NL), Swedish Lapland AiR, Visual Artist Support Center Norrbotten, Institute of Urban Cultural Bielsko-Biala (PL), Luleåbiennalen, Jillat Sámi dance centre, SWAN Residency Network and Aejlies – Sámien Jarnge.**

Transbordering Art, will be made in collaboration with **N.O.P.E performance network (FI/SE)** working with **Associazione 47/04, Krytyka Polityczna Political Critique (PL), GFGZ – Gesellschaft zur Förderung der grenzüberschreitenden Zusammenarbeit (CH), Visual Voices (CY), Teater Na Konfini (SI/IT), Slubfurt E.V.(PL/DE), HapKult (SE/FI), Društvo humanistov Goriške Goriška Humanist Association (SI).**

Luleå University of Technology (LTU) ARC (Arts-based Research Centre), **Sound Studies Centre, Leiden. The Royal Conservatoire in the Hague, Soundtrackcity, the Hague, KLUSTER and society for contemporary music,** will work on the project Sounding Urban Spaces, and premiere new works created by the composer Anders Hultqvist (SE) and by the TCP/IP quartet, for carillon and instrumentalists including the Norrbotten chamber orchestra.

In the projects Natural Gatherings and the Architect Arks we will partner up with organisations and institutions which focus on sustainable urban development in architecture, planning, design and research like; Arctic Design Center, ArkDes, LTU, **Institute of Urban Culture Bielsko Biala (PL)** and Warm in the winter. Also to reach international architects that can be part of the projects.

Some of these projects will also communicate research on space weather and auroras, connecting art, research and engineering. The Boreal Crown by the artist duo Bigert & Bergström could partner up with networks like **Swedish Institute of Space Physics and The European Space University for Earth and Humanity (UNIVERSEH)** which is an excellent channel for contacts connected to Space Engineering at the LTU, and six other universities in Europe.
For our bigger ceremonies we have been in dialogue with **Walk the Plank (UK**), who have worked with other big events and European Capital of Culture. We will work with experienced people to help us bring out our stories and bring our places to life through big and communicative outdoor art performances.

As the journey continues, we are eager to welcome artists and partners to our Movement.

Q12.

Our strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public

Kiruna's European Capital of Culture strategy for attracting a broad European and international public to our ECoC year is built on three pillars: high quality, strong existing networks, and sustainable cultural tourism. We aim to leverage our globally recognised status as a unique destination while integrating cultural elements that offer a deeper and more holistic experience. This approach will help us engage European and international audiences, elevating Kiruna as not just a natural wonder but a cultural hub. Working closely with Swedish Lapland, Kiruna Lapland and Visit Sweden, we can access their established networks to successfully broaden our reach.

The municipality is already a globally recognised tourist destination, and the numbers show that we have over 580 000 guest nights per year, with Icehotel alone attracting visitors from over 80 countries annually, making us one of the top five destinations in Sweden. We'll use this built-up interest to market our ECoC year by incorporating more cultural dimensions into the visitor experience. Icehotel is a strong partner for our flagship productions in the opening and closing ceremonies. They are also celebrating their 40 year anniversary in 2029. Both the ECoC and anniversary give them the incentive to walk the extra mile and add another layer of cultural experience to the already high-quality artistic experience they offer. By collaborating with the Icehotel we will be able to reach international audiences and visitors on a global level.
We aim to expand the current offering of Kiruna by adding a strong cultural layer. Kiruna's focus is on developing and diversifying its visitor experience throughout the year. Currently, we experience peaks during specific seasons; by weaving cultural experiences into the visitor journey, we can extend visitor stays and distribute tourist activity more evenly across the year.

By taping into established European and global cultural networks, we will enhance our visibility and draw interest from cultural tourists and professionals alike. By working with Swedish embassies, cultural attaches, and international cultural councils, we will promote Kiruna as an up-and-coming cultural destination across Europe.

Our focus will be on European themes and topics such as the relationship between nature, culture, technology and indigenous and minority cultures in contemporary contexts. Projects will explore subjects like sustainable urban transformation, the impact of climate change and the intersection of nature and creativity. These are highly relevant to European audiences and allow us to connect to broader continental issues, positioning Kiruna as a thought leader in these areas.

While many destinations around the world suffer from mass tourism, Kiruna is taking a proactive approach to ensure that we remain a sustainable and exclusive destination. Rather than focusing on sheer volume, we priorities quality and create

meaningful experiences for visitors. Kiruna's natural landscapes have a carrying capacity, and we are committed to ensuring that our tourism model respects this, avoiding the negative impacts seen in other heavily visited cities and regions in Europe.

Our ECoC strategy emphasises that every cultural interaction is of the highest quality. We prioritise depth and authenticity in our projects, inviting world-class artists and cultural organisations while maintaining the intimate and immersive nature of our events. This approach guarantees visitors receive a personalised and enriching cultural experience, not found in mass-tourist destinations.

By leveraging our existing tourism success, collaborating with strong cultural networks that integrate innovative cultural projects, we will not only attract visitors, but leave a lasting impact on how Kiruna is perceived globally. This is not just an opportunity to bring tourists to Kiruna – it is an opportunity to shape Kiruna's future as a sustainable cultural destination we will bring to Europe, deeply connected to nature, history and innovation.

Q13.
Cooperation plans with other European Capitals of Culture

Through the ambassadors meeting (see Q11) in Kiruna in October 2024, we established great contacts with the upcoming ECoC cities of Skopje 2028, North Macedonia, Nova Gorica 2025 in Slovenia and Èvora 2027 in Portugal. Through the ambassadors' network we will be able to gain knowledge of these ECoC cities walking before us and create projects together.

The borderless European Capital of Culture, Nova Gorica and Gorizia is a very interesting set up as a transborder collaboration and "joint ECoC". We have a lot in common with them as our municipality too is bordering other countries, Norway and Finland, sharing the region of Sápmi and Tornedalen and creating a seamless community. We also found the obvious connection with Èvora and their intangible heritage "Vagar", relating to our project Practicing our Knowledge, giving us a great possibility to invite the Èvora creative team for collaboration.

To build on existing knowledge, we've teamed up with Bad Ischl/Salzkammergut 2024 in Austria, with whom we share many similarities and who have given us great support. We are similar in size, in the geographical position of mountainous and alpine territory with plenty of villages and a few major cities. We are both hot spots for tourism and we even share the active industrial identity and heritage of mining: salt and iron ore. Just like Bad Ischl, Kiruna only has a few large cultural venues. So we need to be smart, creative and innovative and make use of what we have, and like them, using warehouses, industrial sites used for salt production, silos, churches and train stations. Thanks to the support from the Bad Ischl team, we can prevent ourselves from falling into some of the pits they've experienced and build on their knowledge and legacy.

We share some common features and aspects with Bodø 2024 and Oulu 2026, all located within Sápmi and all being Nordic cities. From Bodø we've picked up and learned a lot about their work with young people, this has helped us to frame our goals and include a young community mind-set, bringing in a youth festival, exchanges and a Youth Producer into the ECoC team. With Oulu we share their idea of being a city with cool contrasts on the outskirts of Europe and that they, as well as Bodø, are working with their shifting seasonality to build their programme. With both Oulu and Bodø we've had conversations around indigenous and minority culture perspectives, how we can follow on their best practice example and learn from their organisations, communications and outreach. As a part of our evaluation, we want to develop a report bringing together Bodø, Kiruna and Oulo looking at how the ECoC has changed our mutual cultural landscape and built legacy for the action in the North: Culture in the Cold.

BIGERT & BERGSTRÖM
SOLAR EGG
RIKSBYGGEN

The Hungarian team in Veszprém gave us a lot of insight on how they worked well with involving their many villages and communities around Veszprém. We saw how engaging the wider community felt and was included in their cultural programme, by allowing open calls for small budgets, giving the associations and community members a possibility to arrange cultural events on their own. A lovely way of working we hope to carry on in our municipality. They also developed a new digital museum as a part of their ECoC actions, knowledge to be shared with us as we set out to open the Kiruneum as a part of our legacy.

Meeting the team of Chemnitz, Germany, inspired us a lot with their way of working with garages. How individuals turn their private, 10sqm garages into workshops, studios and all sorts of creative locations. That was a starting point for our 100 Stages, the idea of turning a regular, ordinary place into an unexpected and creative site!

We hope to have the honour to receive the ECoC hat from title holders of 2028: Budweis, Bourges and Skopje. We actually share some common aspects with Skopje, learning from the ambassador that a big part of the city was destroyed in a big earthquake in the 1960s, forcing them to rebuild large parts of the city. Linking to the Budweis project on Womenpedia, we share a female perspective to our Behind the Gates project. With Bourges 2028, we have the benefit to build on their project about artistic train journeys, with the possibility to extend the travels from the European heart, out in the bloodstreams

of rails going north. Together we can make long-distance train rides a part of the creative European sustainable movement!

Together with the four Polish and fellow candidate Swedish city, Uppsala, we have formed an agreement whereby we have committed ourselves in solidarity to work together regardless of the outcome of the competition. Knowing that Lublin secured the Polish ECoC title, we have already set up connections to further develop our relationship if we are awarded.

Together with Bielsko-Biala we share several projects linking our cities together. In Making it Visual we connect on the theme of searching for a place's identity and soul, the need to move due to outer circumstances of war or crumbling buildings, linking to our city transformation. In Take a Bite at Nature, we zoom in on lost skills in traditional cooking and practical knowledge. By reviving forgotten recipes in search for new tastes and cultural culinary heritage, we strengthen the local cuisine and are able to share flavoursome dinners cross-nations. The Laboratory of Humour is a way of making young people connect online, sharing funny moments, sharing laughter and smiles with youths from other European countries, building connections based on your shared humour, something we'll lift in our Arctic Fire festival with young people.

Reaching out to our geographical polar opposite, a city bidding for 2030, Lemesos in Cyprus, we quickly understood that we are facing similar challenges. Creative urbanism, youth activation and being a European frontier connected our cities, and our Arctic Fire festival will develop as a youth exchange between our cities.

We have also teamed up well with Kortrijk, in Belgium, another bidding city for the 2030 title. Sharing challenges around mental health issues and brain drain, we see plenty of opportunities for creative collaborations in projects around Natural Gathering and Culture Knocks on your Door.

OUTREACH

Q14.
Involvement of the local population

As we described in Q2 and Q3, a significant chunk of our strategic goals for 2029 are invested in using culture to make Kiruna a better place to stay in or return to for young people. We are reaching out to and better connecting our rural communities. And we are making sure our indigenous and minority cultures feel that they are an integral part of the collective identity and culture.

We already mentioned that our great cathedrals of culture are few in numbers, but investing in cultural possibilities closer to home and filling them with meaning is no second-best solution. Projects like 100 Stages will bring opportunities to nurture and showcase local talent alongside more recognised names.

In fact, care for people and the nature around us are the core of our bid. And we want a broad bottom-up structure where we work with local people to include them in the process, from the drawing board to the live celebration of culture. Art, culture and social activities as a base to spark creativity, dialogue, relationships and celebrate diversity. Local people, associations and organisations have shared their hopes, dreams and sparkling ideas with us. These have then been woven into our application.

After preselection we have arranged several Kulturfika (culture coffee breaks) and culture after work to go deeper in conversations with our locals to see the strength and glow in Kiruna's culture scene. As one of our participants put it:

"The most important thing is to make culture accessible. All people living in Kiruna and Norrbotten should have access to culture, for a thriving and growing population".

As a result, we have actually received around 170 project ideas, from local associations, organisations, creative and culture sector. We also held one on one dialogues with artists, creators, researchers, tourism sector and associations to develop the artistic programme.

This has led to many concrete ideas and projects outlined in Q6.

Community participation and capacity
We also reached out more widely across our Norrbotten Region including joint meetings with the 14 municipalities, the Regional Development Board, Tornedalsrådet, The Sami Parlament regional networks and more. In our conversations, we heard examples of difficulties in making new friends and become part of the community in Norrbotten. People expressed a lack of opportunity to try new things and have places to meet and socialise. This led to a pilot community dance project that inspires people to meet other people through dance. We plan to extend this concept to other cultural expressions.

Rural inclusion
One key area in Outreach is rural community inclusion. The city transformation has for some years put a lot of focus on the city centre. Now the ECoC candidacy has to rebalance the process to make sure that it includes the people and communities in the whole municipality.

We have seen this gap of inclusion through the project Visioner i Norr (Visions in the North), a project being led by ArkDes. The project is located in Svappavaara, a village community 35 kilometres from Kiruna. The team has listened to the local population expressing feelings of invisibility, of being forgotten and being seen as a burden instead of an asset for the municipality.

To ensure we include our rural areas we will create a mobile "office", showing up in different rural communities. This office will be developed further as a soundboard to continue the dialogue, eventually transforming into a stage or a meeting place. Together with local associations and homesteads we will join forces to make rural parts of Kiruna and Norrbotten flourish. We will also connect this to our 100 Stages project to build capacity and make culture accessible to people.

Co-create, participate, give your time or stories
We will make it easy to stay informed, know how to get involved and to access information on participation in various ways, like audience, volunteering, partnership or producers. We understood from talking to local people that there is a big need for places to be able to practice being on stage in front of an audience, especially for young people. So, we will make space for the next generation of grass-roots and Open Up to Culture.

Next to this, a volunteering programme will be set up to infuse and spark enthusiasm in the local community, to be part of the movement in the way they can and want to. Associational life and support are a key European opportunity and is an antidote to some of the more aggressive "tribalism" that threatens to tear our societies apart. So, a key feature of Kiruna 2029 will be to give our associations (almost 400 of them in Kiruna) the support they need to be involved in the best way possible for them. Associations will also be involved in major events and festivals in ECoC serving as creators, hosts, ambassadors, volunteers, and organisers. Associations and citizens will be invited to participate as extras or performers for our larger events. Amateurs and professionals will meet and collaborate to create, for example Arctic Fire, Arctistic Residence, 100 Stages and Human Machine.

Through the ECoC 2029 programme, local communities in Kiruna can connect to local communities and people in other places and, especially, other associational models in Europe. We are more alike and united than we think.

Young Kiruna, ambassadorship and "cultural Buddies"
Reports of perceived loneliness and growing mental illness in all ages reach us more often than we wish. The speed in today's society seems to shelter us from each other and make us drift apart. We want to go the other way. To reconnect our communities and bring people together! When visiting the local high school, the common thing the students were all missing, was places to gather, socialise and spend time. Society has not lived up to expectations for young people in the city transformation process so far. To get the young people on board, we can't just listen, we need to actually involve them and help them create places together.

Q15.
Opportunities for everyone, not only the privileged

Hjalmar Lundbohm, the first managing director of LKAB, was clear that culture, public education and associational life were important to build a society where people thrive. Our ambition for Kiruna 2029 is for everyone to find something to take part in. There will be meeting places, exhibitions and events where you participate when it suits you e.g. in the project Digital Art Room, Take a Bite at Nature or visiting the Kiruneum.

As we indicated in Q14, our associational model is the key route to engaging with local people on their own terms and in places where they feel supported and valued. This is no exception for people who face disadvantage for whatever reason. We want to use the ECoC opportunity to strengthen our ability to be culturally inclusive.

We will work closely with municipal bodies that meet residents in different ways and on different issues, especially the Social Services, Labour Market Unit, whose mission is, among other things, holiday work for young people and pensioner services. The goal is to make people self-sufficient through work and/or studies. Together with the ECoC organisation they can match culture activities, volunteer assignments, internships or cultural work opportunities.

To further create opportunities for participation of marginalised and disadvantaged groups we engage in dialogue with a wide range of "support councils" – e.g. access, pensioners, youth etc. These councils will be consulted on questions regarding programme development and event logistics for Kiruna 2029 to make sure we take into account those individuals with the biggest barriers to cultural access and participation. In Sweden, we comply with accessibility laws and directives both in terms of digital accessibility and for public spaces. Already, through workshops during the spring of 2024 with those councils, we pinpointed needs, targets groups, ideas and strengths for Kiruna 2029 seen from their perspective. You will find a lot of what we gathered from these workshops in our key objectives.

Cultural minorities, indigenous people and heritage

With the Minority Language Council, the ECoC team talked about ways to involve indigenous and minority associations and organisations. The council expressed that they want to be part of projects that make their cultures visible in the public space and we will together find the way forward to do so. We have also talked with the council and Svenska Tornedalingarnas Riksförbund – Tornionlaaksolaiset, STR-t, (Swedish Tornedalian National Association) about the organisation structure that will be set up and the importance that everyone working for Kiruna 2029 organisation has understanding and knowledge about indigenous and minority cultures and languages.

As a first education session during our pre-selection phase, STR-t, held a digital talk for the employees in the municipality. This type of cultural sessions will be implemented in the ECoC organisation, and also accessible for visitors and schools to know more about the different minorities, cultures and languages in our municipality.

Conclusions on Inclusion!

In Kiruna, we have a relatively small proportion of socio-economically vulnerable people. The most economically deprived area in the city is right next to the strongest one. We can see that single parents, elderly, people living in villages and people depending on public transport, tend to become marginalised as it makes it difficult to take part in cultural events in the city when living in rural areas. It has been shown through various studies that those who are socio-economically vulnerable, tends to drift away from cultural life.

Projects like the Architect Arks, Making it Visual or Practicing our Knowledges are all activities that help newcomers, expats, migrants and refugees who come to Kiruna, to understand what kind of a place this is and what the perks of living in Arctic Kiruna are. Our idea of Cultural Buddies will serve as a warm welcome for new people, prevent isolation, create a social comfort zone right where Kiruna's new heart beats for culture. We need competence from Europe, and we want them to call Kiruna their home and stay for the long-term because they like it here, not just as a short career step.

FANNY KIVIMÄKI
GRO
BIG WIND

Children, teenagers and young people, LGBTQI+
When visiting the secondary school, students expressed a strong wish for places to gather, socialise and spend time together. Today they mostly spend time at home, and they lack a community spirit. In the city transformation the School of Culture, the Youth Club and the City Library have new facilities and work hard to create safe places for young people. But still young people ask for better meeting places in public spaces, in the city and in the villages.

During the bidding process we have looked at other ECoC cities' work to engage the young population and we have been inspired by Bodø, Budweis and Tartu among others. We will continue to collaborate with other ECoC cities to build a strong engagement for this target group. Involving them in creating experiences, cultural exchanges with other young people in Europe, and to incorporate projects and experiences that they dream of for Kiruna.

Kiruna Municipality/Youth Club is one of six municipalities in Norrbotten Region that participates in a project where the goal is to create safe meeting places for young people within LGBTQI+, in both physical and digital form. The project started on the 24th of October 2024 and last until June 2025. The evaluation will then show how the project will continue in the autumn of 2025 and how the ECoC team can be involved with the LGBTQIA+ community.

We will also use our Youth Consultants who collaborate with the city's social department and the Labour Market Unit to reach young people who are not currently participating in other activities or education. Through these networks, we will be able to reach less engaged groups of young people. By introducing a structure for Dream summer jobs involving culture activities for young people, they can share their work and tour around the municipality to perform for different groups.

More on young people and schools in Q15.

The digital way
The national Digitalisation Strategy for Sweden points out that today's societal development is largely driven and shaped by digitalisation, in all fields and sectors including democracy, social interaction, employment, local and regional development and sustainable development. Digitalisation means that we can do completely new things and that things we have previously done can be done in completely new ways. To be involved and work in a development that in many ways can raise quality of life and give us new opportunities is exciting, but also challenging for those who do not keep up, or perhaps do not want to. We therefore need to work in both directions.

Just as Kiruna residents want access to information digitally and in physical places, the population needs to be able to take part in cultural events according to their circumstances. Not all people have a smartphone or the capacity to handle it. Physical places need to be accessible to people with different disabilities and the opportunity to participate remotely needs to be refined. Digital tools can bring us closer together in Europe, we can create conditions for participation and digital meeting places, play or network as in the project Digital Art Room. But as so many Kirunians pointed out during the outreach process, the most important thing is that there are physical meeting places, with low thresholds where everyone is welcome. We plan to get the best of both in Kiruna 2029.

Q16.

Audience development, education and schools

To build our strategy for audience development, we have focused on getting to know our existing audience better. As in much of Europe, this audience primarily comprises middle-aged and older women who are already interested in culture and who attend the cultural events on offer, such as performing arts, art exhibitions, and author talks.

Particular events can be successfully targeted at specific groups, often when they feature local artists. Cinema, which is accessible to all ages, is universally popular and available in Kiruna city as well as in the village of Vittangi. Kiruna also hosts events that attract a younger audience, such as the existing festivals. The biggest challenge is encouraging the majority of people to leave their couches and attend events, a struggle we likely share with the rest of the world!

People often express that they struggle to find out what's happening. During this bidding phase we have worked on our digital platform, making it visible in our public space and inviting civic society to meetings—both one-on-one and in larger venues. From conversations and reflections shared by attendees at various gatherings, we have heard and seen a strong interest in participating in local activities, and there is an expressed need for easy access to follow the ECoC journey. This will be part of our communication and participation plan. More about that will be provided in Q38.

From what we gathered from different generations, both young and old, there is a desire for traditional noticeboards, where posters and information can be pinned up by everyone. This practice is still alive in the villages and serves as a great resource for knowing what's on, as well as providing an informal meeting place. Sometimes, the old ways should be revived, and this is on our to-do list!

Based on our findings, this is the shift we need to go through

Don't know
Lack of information or don't know where to get information

Not for me
Don't think it's for them or not knowing how to attend and what is culture

Too expensive
Not willing or not able to pay for tickets

Don't have time
Too much going on at the same time

Can't get there
Too far to go to the venues/or not able to get there

Information ease
Easy to find, understand and act on, digital and analogue

Something for everyone
Low threshold to culture and culture in new places and art-forms, culture in education

Easy access
Take culture to the audience, digital participation, culture commute.

Calendar overview
Something to attend when its suits you as audience, spread out big venues during the year, small things more often.

Affordable
Diverse programme and pay what you can, some groups for free.

To work on audience development, we will hook arms with Arrangörer i Norr (Organisers in the North), a non-profit association that carries out organiser promotion efforts throughout the Region of Norrbotten. A knowledge-raising network that brings together organisers, large and small, in different art forms. A forum where collaboration can grow and be made visible. The ECoC organisation will set up meetings to support local associations to follow up the audience development together as part of the communication plan. Riksteatern Norrbotten is applying to host Riksteatern's national congress in Kiruna in 2027, which is a fantastic opportunity to strengthen organisers locally and nationally, to network and talk about cultural issues.

Stealth Education - Motivating the hard ones!
Kiruna can be perceived as a rather tough place at times and where feelings are best kept inside. A place where culture among certain groups is perceived as something strange, difficult and ridiculous. We want to change that. Culture is for everyone and a key group that we want to involve more as an audience is the ones who might be misunderstood as a tough crew – men and women alike. We want to invite them to take part in culture and appreciate it, and who knows, maybe be the ones on stage later on! We call it "stealth education". By reaching out to them through their interests, which often includes the forest, hunting, fishing and vehicles, we "stealthily" add culture, art, and history to their world through projects like 100 stages or invite them to become co-creators in our project Natural Gathering.

The young people that drive an A-traktor (a slow-moving vehicle that is allowed to be driven from age 15) is also a group of people we want to attract as new audiences. The A-traktor culture is growing in Sweden, particularly in the North. Not everyone appreciates this culture or whether they should even be allowed driving on the streets. But we want to change that mindset and involve the young drivers during cultural events. As helpers, cultural carpool/commute or use the A-traktor as a stage.

Expats and guest workers (fly in, fly out)
This may seem a little upside down for outsiders, but a group that feels so excluded that they tend to leave after an average of two years are the expats. Highly educated people who struggle with the language barrier, but also with our Swedish tendency of rather keeping our circles closed. During the project, we will, with the help of reference groups and the municipality's Relocation guide, find ways for new residents to get to know Kiruna through culture and participation and establish connections in their new place we hope they will call home. With help from AI and experience from other ECoC cities before us we will develop digital tools so they can participate even if they don't know the language.

Generation gap, let's get together!
Some generations ago, most of one's family would live close by. Today we tend to move around more. At the same time, communication and staying in touch has never been so easy. Despite this, more and more people feel lonely and excluded from social life. We want to highlight the cultural heritage of living as a community, togetherness and helping each other again. The fact that knowledge has been passed on from generation to generation by a learning-by-doing-principle, can be applied to bring new audiences to culture.

It can also be scary to go to a cultural event on your own or for the first time. So, as mentioned in Q15 for some of the vulnerable groups, we make offers to "bring a friend" or to apply as a Cultural Buddie, even a Cultural Buddie across generations – Gen Z goes Boomers! We create cultural carpooling or why not let Culture Knock on your Door? There are also senior citizens' associations that bring together older individuals who can be active in groups or on their own. If the elderly cannot leave the senior housing, culture must come to them. For the elderly who can get to a local venue, we want to organise similar events where older people can mix and enjoy culture together with younger people. Gen Z and Boomers mix and match and share knowledge and capture the experiences from one another.

Young Kiruna – schools and education
As we indicated in Q2 (Cultural Strategy) and in the Artistic Programme, the cultural development of young people is a major strategic goal. We want to help them become rounded, resilient young people who know and appreciate the entirety of their culture, and who are creative and flexible. We say more here to build on what we said in Q15.

In Kiruna municipality there are 16 primary schools, of which 12 are municipal and two are Sami schools. Six schools are located in villages. Most primary schools with classes up to year 6 have after-school centres on the same premises. One municipal High school and the Space High School (a private school specialising in space education) – are both located in Kiruna city. Preschools or other educational care have good geographical distribution both in Kiruna centre and in the municipality's larger villages. There are 28 preschools, of which 22 are municipal and two are run by the Sami School Board.

Mapping the needs of preschools and schools we can sum it up like this:

Lack of staff, tight schedules and little space in the curriculum for cultural and creative subjects.

Difficult to pay for buses to cultural venues and excursions, long distances

Need for understanding of the connection between culture and school.

This isn't what we want or need for the future.

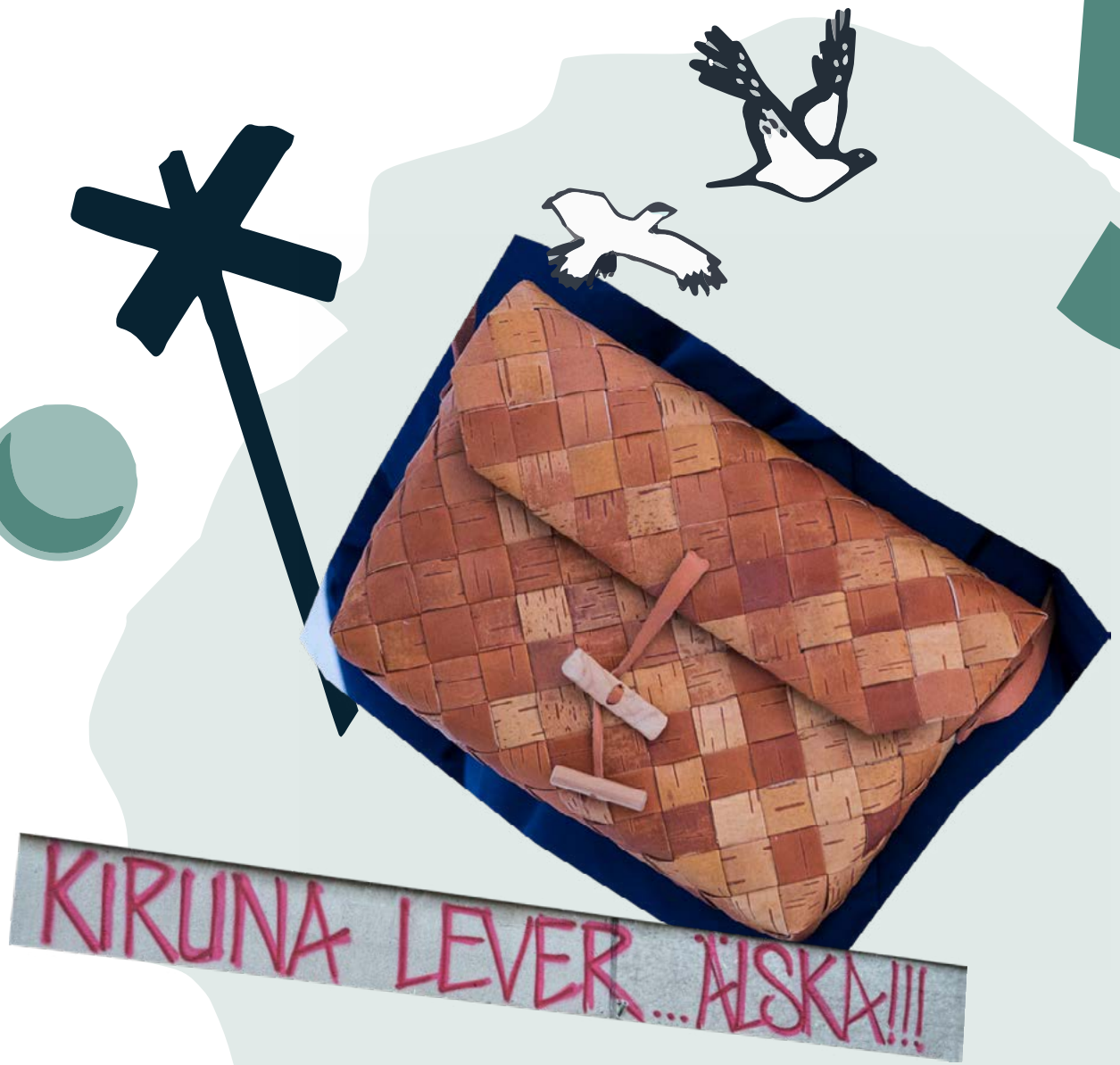
Through Creative School projects (Skapande skola project) and the established cultural activities in schools and preschools, children and students currently encounter performing arts and other cultural expressions, both as audience and in the creative process. This will be further developed during the ECoC project.

At the moment progress is being made together with the regional culture developers, institutions and producers of cultural programmes to better meet the schools' cultural needs. Region Norrbotten together with the 14 municipalities are developing a platform "Kulturbron" that will collect the cultural offers in one place. After-school centres will be places to start up workshops, co-creation or guided activities, as set out in both our cultural strategy and our long-term vision. There is a current shortage of teachers and educators in Kiruna. So we'd like to work on a strategy for cultural creators to be involved in parts of the aesthetic subjects, to create an innovative synergy where teachers can focus on their areas of expertise. And at the same time, cultural creators can use their expertise to conduct educational cultural lessons linked to the educational curriculum in music, dance, art, photography, crafts and film. For some students, alternative teaching methods may work better than regular classroom instruction.

Finding new ways to collaborate and by reaching out to associations has already led to Sverige Finska Ungdomsförbundet (Swedish-Finnish Youth Association) and Met nouret (an organisation for the young connected to Meänkieli language and culture) to arrange a minority language film festival "Yksi kaksi" in Kiruna in mid-November 2024. Jukkasjärvi homestead association has a project called Bada i Kultur (Immerse In Culture), where students can learn about the Sámi and Tornedalian culture, side by side. A concept to develop further through the Kiruneum project and extend to other homesteads in the municipality.

The aesthetic programmes at the secondary school are involved in the yearly snow festival for the making of the snow and ice playground. They also collaborate with the Kin Museum of Contemporary Art and other associations in various cultural projects and workshops with artists. The students told us they want to be part of the Kiruna 2029 programme in various ways and they expressed a particular desire for meeting places and a greenhouse. This has planted a seed for a project linked to the project Making it Visual, where students in aesthetics and construction programmes together with cultural creators could build the greenhouse from disused windows from the old town hall! Great to know that the future is green for our young people.

MANAGEMENT 5



Q17.
Total operating budget

Total income to cover operating expenditure (in euros)	From the public sector (in euros)	From the public sector (in %)	From the private sector (in euros)	From the private sector (in %)
21 800 000	17 900 000	82%	3 960 000	18%

We have increased the budget from the pre-selection phase significantly both in the public and the private sector. Please see Q19 for detailed information on the public contribution and on the private sector in Q22.

Q18.
Income to be received from the public sector

Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure	In euros	%
National Government	9 680 000	54%
City	3 500 000	20%
Region	3 400 000	19%
EU (with the exception of the Melina Mercouri Prize)	1 320 000	7%
TOTAL	**17 900 000**	**100%**

Q19.

Financial commitments towards operating budget

City

Since preselection, Kiruna municipality has doubled its contribution to € 3.5 million. The budget from Kiruna municipality was formally confirmed on 7 October 2024 by Kiruna City Council. Given the huge cost of the city move the city needs to handle the economic situation with care and respect for people in the municipality and for generations to come. Nevertheless, the ECoC is seen as a very high priority. The increased amount is not taken from other municipality welfare or services but we are directing our core funds to reach the long-term goals stated in the Cultural and the Growth Strategies since the city sees ECoC as a crucial milestone in our strategic road map. We also anticipate additional in-kind contributions from the city through secondments and other support. The primary aim after the ECoC year is being able to sustain comparably high levels of cultural activity long term. This could partly be achieved by index-regulating the cultural budget.

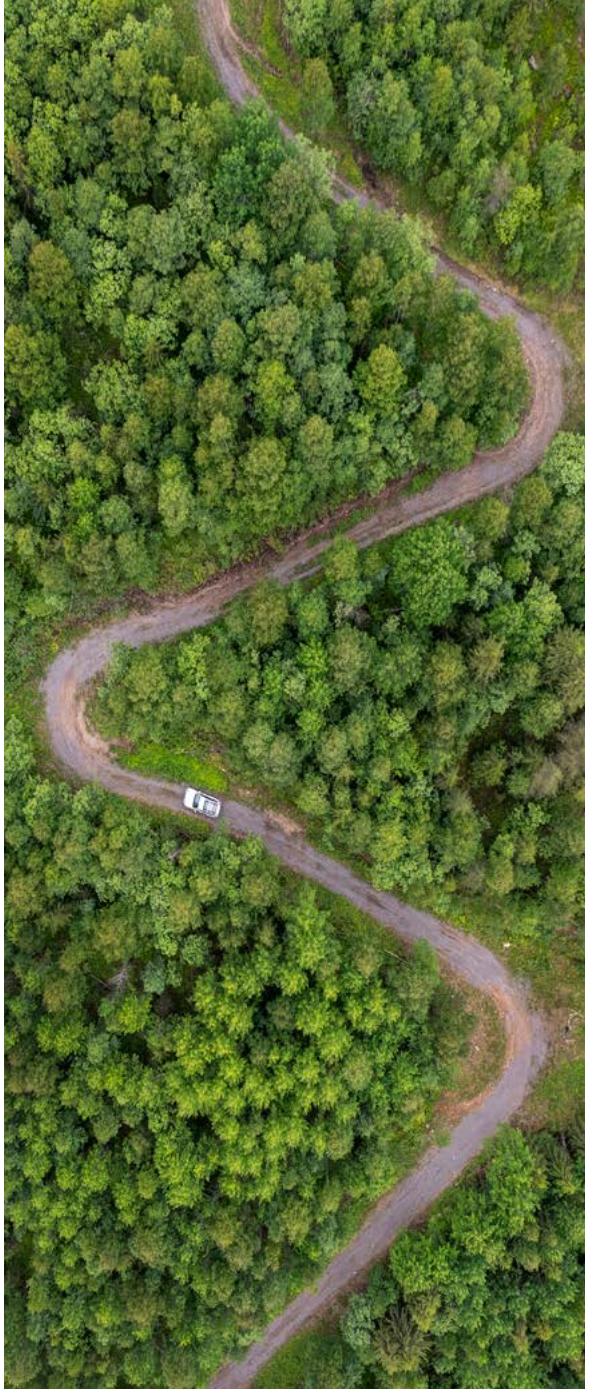
As you will see in Q25, money is planned to be spent on infrastructure connected to cultural values. Kiruna municipality has applied the national recommendation of the 1% rule since 2018, and our strategic goal is to make sure it will be used continuously. The rule regulates that 1% of the budget is set aside for art and design in every city development project.

Region

The commitment and involvement from the Norrbotten Region have significantly increased since pre-selection phase. The Department of Regional Development, including both the cultural and business units, are now highly involved, and have expressed a strong political commitment. We have received support both through human resources as well as financial support during our candidacy. On 25 September 2024, the Regional Development Board made the official commitment for a proposed budget including support for the organisation, added budget for the regional institutions and earmarked budget for ECoC projects. The final decision on the budget by the Region Norrbotten will be made in February 2025 if Kiruna is designated.

Government

The proposal from the Ministry of Culture to the Cultural Department, was handled during the Government budget process in September 2024. No final decision was made during the process and as the Cultural department have not given the candidate cities any further information by the time of the hand-in of the second bid book, Kiruna municipality will handle the state contribution as presented in the proposition to the Cultural Department of 9.7 m Euro. On top of these 9.7 m Euro, national authorities will be appointed to collaborate with the designated ECoC city and enable them to apply for extra Government funding.



Q20.
Fundraising from Union programmes

Kiruna City Council, as well as Region Norrbotten, are big organisations who are used to running cross-national and international projects with funding from EU and external partners. We have in-house knowledge of administrating, reporting and following up long-term running projects with good results.

However, for a small organisation, association or individual artists, it can be overwhelming and daunting to handle big projects and heavy administrative reports demanded by EU funding. We have therefore incorporated extra administrative support into the ECoC organisation, to specifically assist our local creative partners in finding, applying, administrating and reporting EU funding, together with the Swedish Creative Europe Desk.

This will strengthen and build capacity in our professional creative industry with new skills long after 2029. Here we are naming some projects that could potentially apply to specific EU programmes. Projects like Behind the Gates, Making it Visual, or Sounding Urban Place could apply for Creative **Europe Culture Strand** whilst **Erasmus+** lends itself well for our projects with youth – be it the youth production team in our organisation or encouraging young people to learn a minority language in Culture Knocks on your Door or our youth project Arctic Fire. Young people from all over Europe could apply to the **European Solidarity Corps** to join our Volunteers' programme and spend some time in the Arctic. Our projects Boreal Crown and Sounding Urban Places have connections to the **Horizon Europe** funding scheme.

For the **LIFE programme** projects connected to climate change and low impact on the environment could apply e.g. Arctic Fire, Transbordering Art (about train travel) and Practising our Knowledge. For the **Culture Moves Europe** scheme our Arctic Residence project could help bring international artists to Kiruna and our women workers in industry project Behind the Gates could fit the pillar Equality, Rights and Gender Equality of the **CERV Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values** programme. As well as our projects focusing on minority and Sami rights like Eadnámet.

In some of the major projects we as an ECoC organisation within the municipality will be able to apply for funding ourselves, for example youth exchanges and artist residencies. Whilst in others we can be a partner in the application or help build the capacities of partners to go through the EU funding application process.

The Swedish Creative Europe Desk has been a great help in conversations and support about EU funding, both ongoing and potential future open calls. With their support we have held open breakfast meetings for the creative and artistic industry in Kiruna. Showing what types of EU funding is available for different projects is a great way to support the creative sector.

Kiruna is a part of Leader Tornedalen 2030, one of the hundreds of Leader areas in Europe and jointly financed by the EU, State, Region and municipality, focusing on rural development based on the Leader-method of a three-partners-collaboration. The Kiruna ECoC organisation has a well-established partnership with the local Leader Tornedalen manager, Linda Tapper, who has participated in several dialogues and meeting with the civic society and open meetings about how Leader can finance cultural development and projects in rural communities.

"Om I icke omvänden eder och bliven såsom barn, skolen I icke komma in i himmelriket. Den som nu så ödmjukar sig, att den bliver såsom detta barn, den är den störste i himmelriket."
Matteus 18:3-4
00:00:00

LINN HILDA LAMBERG AND BENJAMIN QUIGLEY
VÄCKELSEN
INSTITUTET / KONSTFRÄMJANDET NORRBOTTEN

Q21.

Timetable for income of operating budget

Source of income	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Total	In %
EU		88 000 €	88 000 €	440 000 €	704 000 €	1 320 000 €	6%
National Government			1 584 000 €	2 200 000 €	5 896 000 €	9 680 000 €	43%
City	484 000 €	730 400 €	657 400 €	690 800 €	941 600 €	3 504 200 €	16%
Region	180 400 €	356 400 €	822 800 €	965 800 €	1 083 700 €	3 409 100 €	15%
Sponsors	264 000 €	440 000 €	440 000 €	1 320 000 €	1 496 000 €	3 960 000 €	18%
Other (tickets)		26 400 €	44 000 €	88 000 €	264 000 €	422 400 €	2%
Total						22 295 700 €	100,0%

Q22.
Fundraising from private sponsors

Partnering up with private sponsors is a way to carry on the legacy of how the city was founded: city and iron-ore mine side by side. Public and private sector in a joint effort. We hope to build a structure that we can share with Europe. How the municipality, communities and private sector can together build a better place to live! That a small city can think big and act globally, with care for one another.

However, given that the private sector will contribute a fair amount to the operational costs, it's also fair to state the inarguable importance of always keeping artistic freedom. Sponsors cannot interfere with the artistic output, and the ECoC organisation and responsible Artistic and General Director will always safeguard the creative process and freedom of artistic expression.

As the ECoC title is a national matter and the winning city will be the host and representing Sweden on the European arena this is a matter for all of Sweden. Companies like Volvo, Vattenfall, Spotify, SJ, SAS and IKEA are some of the national and global companies we have put in our plan as potential ECoC sponsors. To make sure we give the right focus to the sponsor partnerships, we will take onboard a dedicated Sponsorship Manager to the ECoC team. To reach out to national sponsors and using existing networks and competence, we will team up with the regional destination and marketing organisation Swedish Lapland to get investors interested in becoming official financial partners.

Our northern industries are currently booming and the strategy to include regional sponsors is a joint effort, done together with Region Norrbotten. The head of the department for Business Development has reached out to major industries and companies in our region, to show the importance of the European Capital of Culture and the need for the private sector to financially step in to make this happen. And through their support contributing to regional development and cultural growth. LKAB, H2 Green Steel, SSAB, Viscaria and Boliden are all major companies with high impact on the local, regional and national economy. They are all looking to expand and are all in need of more skilled labour, hence why the private sector plays a big part in our ECoC budget.

Norrbotten needs a massive growth in human resources if we are to handle the major industrial investments and aging population coming our way. We need skilled staff in every single sector: education, health care, tourism, space, hospitality and retail. The ECoC action is completely aligned with the Regional Development Strategy which points out the creative industry and the designed living environment as key factors for a more attractive lifestyle in the north.

Indeed, in 2022, the government assigned a specific Employment agency office to open, to boost population growth, education and ease international professionals entering the job market in the northern part of Sweden. The communication for Kiruna ECoC 2029, backed up by the Regional Development Strategy and the input by the Employment agency will all be ways of attracting more labour to our region, by shared campaigns, fairs and marketing.

Norrbotten needs a massive growth in human resources if we are to handle the major industrial investments and aging population coming our way.

By involving sponsors in our ECoC events, we give them a chance to position their company as a workplace with great cultural values, that invest in staff well-being and as a sector with a strong social corporate responsibility. We offer companies who join our ECoC journey, a chance to stand out in the marketing crowd by not only talking about the great job offers they have, but also the wholesome lifestyle they contribute to. We will, of course, give private sponsors appropriate visibility in ECoC projects, tickets to specific events, marketing material, European exposure and the opportunity of supporting regional development, helping them to expand their business. But also, a part of the ECoC sponsor deal includes a unique educational package, to boost, educate and support local businesses and their workforce in cultural values and creative business development.

As Kiruna and Norrbotten is an expanding region, we have new investors and exploiters knocking on our door more frequently than we sometimes can manage. The ambition to become European Capital of Culture, is always an extra argument in the conversation about our attractive region. Our strategy is to involve these private entrepreneurs and prompt them to support the ECoC, alongside their properties and business. Coop Norrbotten is in the process of landing a new large-scale investment in Kiruna and Strawberry Hotel are looking for properties to expand their business in Kiruna, making them perfect targets as ECoC partners.

LKAB has a strong social commitment and community engagement, supporting a wide range of sport, cultural and educational activities and initiatives from the civic society. LKAB are supporting the ECoC action by a signed Letter of Intent and we will continue the dialogue on future collaboration if we are designated the title.

Viscaria is a new mining company in Kiruna, with recently approved permissions to re-open an old copper-mine. Viscaria has been an important and big player in funding cultural and social events in Kiruna since it entered the mining scene. The yearly Kultura Kiruna is an initiative by Viscaria since 2022, who fund the 10-day long cultural festival almost entirely on their own. It has been a big success, and the festival crew has presented great plans for developing the event for a larger European audience and artists in the framework of the ECoC, forming one of our major events.

Sparbanken Nord has been a strong partner from the beginning of this candidacy and has committed to support the ECoC organisation and be a financial partner if we are designated. By earmarking funds for specific ECoC projects in the region, Sparbanken Nord will be able to support cultural infrastructure and artistic projects, lifting our existing cultural offers to an international level.

Our strategy is to collaborate with the different local cluster organisations; Kiruna Växer, Kiruna Lappland and Företagarna who all supports and can help the ECoC organisation to reach out to individual companies for financial support and marketing cooperations in our local community. The strategy of how a business can participate and support the ECoC, how we adapt specific sponsorship packages and incentives will be tailored to their business, their size and capacities.

STUDENTS FROM CHILD CULTURE DESIGN MA, HDK VALAND AND CHILDREN IN KIRUNA
ANDAN
KONSTFRÄMJANDET NORRBOTTEN

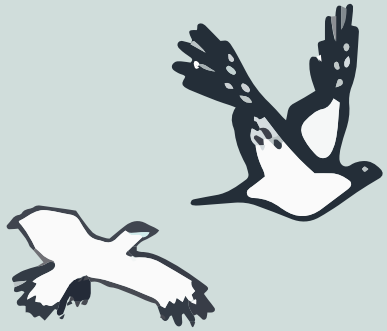
Q23.
Breakdown of operating expenditure

Total of the operating expenditure	Programme expenditure	Programme expenditure (in %)	Promotion and marketing	Promotion and marketing (in %)	Wages, overhead and administration	Wages, overhead and administration (in %)	Evaluation	Evaluation (in %)	TOTAL
	14 500 000 €	65,0%	2 700 000 €	12%	5 020 000 €	22,5%	75 000 €	0,5%	22 268 000 €

*Wages in Sweden are generally high and especially in Kiruna, where industry pays well and all other sectors need to follow their levels to keep up with the market competition. We also need to attract staff from outside Kiruna and Norrbotten, to hire competence needed in the organisation, making the wage one of the incentives to relocate possibly with family to the Arctic for the creative jobs that are on offer.

Our budget for wages, overhead and administration is calculated on a total of 18 full-time positions over the years in the organisation (some seconded and some newly hired) with an increase of resources and part-time jobs as we move closer to 2029.

We have significantly increased the resources for promotion and marketing since preselection to make sure we resonate across Sweden and Europe.



Q24.

Planned timetable for spending operating expenditure

Timetable for spending	Programme expenditure	Programme expenditure (in %)	Promotion and marketing	Promotion and marketing (in %)	Wages, overhead and administration	Wages, overhead and administration (in %)	Evaluation	Evaluation (in %)	Total of the operating expenditure
2025	440 000 €	3%	90 000 €	3%	440 000 €	9%	8 400 €	11%	976 400 €
2026	880 000 €	6%	176 000 €	6%	620 000 €	12%	8 800 €	12%	1 684 800 €
2027	2 200 000 €	15%	370 000 €	15%	970 000 €	19%	8 800 €	12%	3 574 800 €
2028	3 500 000 €	24%	790 000 €	29%	1 140 000 €	23%	10 000 €	13%	5 442 000 €
2029	7 216 000 €	50%	1 230 000 €	45%	1 500 000 €	30%	20 000 €	27%	9 968 000 €
2030	264 000 €	2%	44 000 €	2%	350 000 €	7%	19 000 €	25%	677 000 €
TOTAL	**14 500 000 €**	**100%**	**2 700 000 €**	**100%**	**5 020 000 €**	**100%**	**75 000 €**	**100%**	

Budget for capital expenditure

Q25–29 & Q43
Our capital expenditure position

As you know by now, the situation of the city transformation, our major urban development and massive infrastructural projects in Kiruna, is quite unique for a city of our size. It has been, and still is, a roller-coaster process of negotiating with the state-owned mining company LKAB and coming to agreements about funding, budgets, costs and responsibilities. Everything involving our city transformation has been done through contracts between the city council and the company LKAB, with no current or planned EU funding to cover our capital expenditures connected to the city transformation.

The city transformation process is ongoing regardless of whether we are awarded the European Capital of Culture title or not. But the simple fact is – for the new Kiruna to become a real city again – we need to infuse the transformation process with a European dimension, skills and cultural understanding that we can gain from an ECoC, to make sure that we are building a culturally strong European city for future generations. This transformation is a massive cultural and emotional process that we need to handle, next to the hard and technical infrastructure and practical aspects.

We do not plan to build any major new venues because of our ECoC action. They are already in place or in preparation to be built or moved. But as a result of our ECoC ambition, the project managers and city planners are now focusing on and prioritising some of the projects with great importance to our ECoC year.

A new city hall Kristallen and Kin Museum for Contemporary Art opened late 2018. Next in line to open was our grand cultural venue, Aurora Culture and Congress arena, with several stages, world-class tech, a restaurant, library, art gallery, offices and Youth Club. And in 2023 the new high school and the School of Culture opened their doors. Brand new venues bring on some hard work, forming a solid organisation and for the audience to find their way back. It is something very difficult to do, both because of the audience-loss after covid and because new habits are difficult to establish. Here we have another strong reason to let our ECoC programme and planned events infuse our venues, city and citizens with renewed artistic energy and curiosity for culture.

The city transformation still brings massive infrastructure plans, including building a new hospital, new train station, relocating houses and developing new residential areas. Some of these ongoing and planned infrastructure projects have great importance to our ECoC title and legacy. We list those projects here with the estimated budget for each.

RELOCATION OF THE CHURCH, 2024-2027

Our church is not just a place for religious ceremonies, it's a popular venue for culture. Concerts, talks, theatre, cultural events take place on a regular basis. The church, designed by the architect Gustaf Wickman is one of Sweden's largest wooden buildings and a unique structure, the biggest building that will be relocated in the entire city-move process. To move this massive wooden structure closer to the new centre and the cemetery, is a mighty task. The church will be put on a special trailer and driven about 5 km, using remote controls, during a 2-day slow ride. It will be a big media event and public highlight! The church will be one of the main venues for 2029 and the Parish intends to develop its cultural programme aligned to Kiruna 2029 and will be a partner in several projects.

Timeline: The move will take place during summer season 2025 and the re-opening is planned for 2026-2027. Well in time for our ECoC year!

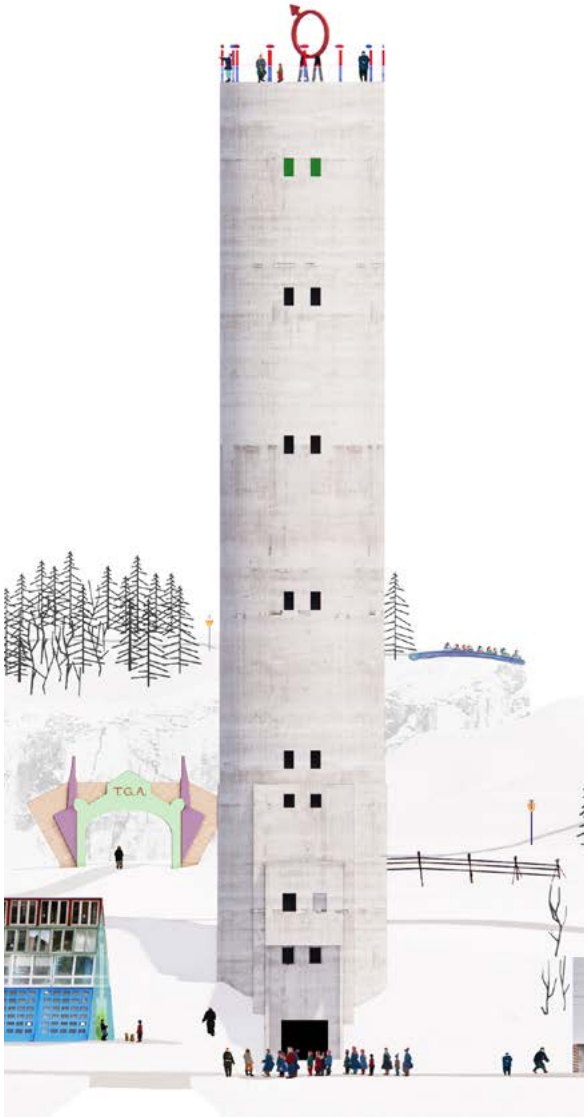
Budget: 7 m Euro, carried out by LKAB and Kiruna Municipality

CONSTRUCTION OF A CITY PARK AND PUBLIC SQUARE

A large green public City Park is currently under development in different stages. The park will be a colorful oasis in the new city plan, connecting the church at one end, all the way to the old mining towers at the other end, passing by the public swimming hall, new venues listed earlier and shopping centres. Several activity areas, stages, and spaces for cultural events and gatherings are included in the City Park plan. Plenty of the public artworks affected by the city transformation will be moved to the City Park. The playground will be built as a playful historical memory of the old Kiruna, a vivid story of the past, for future generations. This will be a park for all ages, a generation get-together, but most important a place for the young Kiruna to grow and feel safe.

The shoemaker's cottage is one of Kiruna's oldest buildings, built in 1899, this provides a unique opportunity to understand how the first settlers lived. It will be given to the municipality by the Parish who owns it now, after it's been moved. It will be placed adjacent to the public city park and function as an open-air historical venue, a satellite to our Kiruneum.
Due to the importance of this park to our ECoC year, this project will be prioritised and all the stages of the City Park are now planned to be finished in time for 2029.

Budget: 8 m Euro, Kiruna Municipality and LKAB
Timeframe: 2024-2027



ELDSBERGET PERSPEKTIV
VISIONER I NORR

TGA - TUOLLUVAARA GRUVAKTIEBOLAG A UNIQUE INDUSTRIAL CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

On a small hill, just next to our new city center, brick buildings and two major towers, the highest about 70 meters tall, bear witness to the mining industry's establishment and mining of iron ore from the Tuolluvaara mine. This area is at risk of being demolished because of the establishment of the new hospital, but the area has a high cultural value. The municipality's ambition is for these buildings to be a part of the new city plan and become an integrated cultural environment. And this area is ideal for the Kiruneum. Negotiations with Region Norrbotten and LKAB are currently ongoing for a final location for the new hospital, and potentially include the industrial heritage buildings. Since mid 2024, the municipality is managing one of the brick buildings, now containing some of the cultural valued artefacts handled in the city transformation. The rest of the Kiruna Culture Object Collection needs to be moved in 2025 due to the city transformation.

This old mining-site area was the focus of the Visions in the North project in 2021-2022, inspired by the initiative New European Bauhaus financed by Vinnova, and now in the spotlight again with another Vinnova financed project Allt ljus på Kiruna (All Lights on Kiruna) 2024-2025. The project is about the attractive living environments of the future through socially sustainable industry, as a strategic resource for green transition.

An opportunity that has arisen in a complex, but not entirely unusual, context of green transition that creates a need for an attractively designed living environment.
The project brings together the municipality, the region, industry and civil society actors in a co-creative process for consensus on an issue with potential land and interest conflicts. The project highlights the prerequisites, opportunities and potential of the place by engaging Kiruna residents in conversations: bringing together associations, municipal administrations and industrial actors for a future scenario that no single party has control over.

Another art piece has recently, in October 2024, been established on the site next to the towers. It is The Solar Egg by Bigert and Bergström for Riksbyggen, a piece of art that also serves as a sauna and room for democratic conversations. The municipality, LKAB and the building company Riksbyggen all financed the artwork being put up at this new, permanent location. The work of turning this area into a cultural meeting hot spot has begun and will be one of our ECoC legacies.

Budget: Kiruneum 1 m Euro. Yearly running costs for Kiruneum 20 000 Euro
Timeframe: 2024-2029

RELOCATION OF PUBLIC ART AND CULTURAL VALUES DUE TO THE CITY TRANSFORMATION, AND THE 1 % RULE.

It is not only houses that need to be relocated in our city transformation, public artworks and cultural heritage also needs to be included in the movement.

The relocation of the public art has been handled in two different agreements with LKAB. 1.8 m Euro was set aside in the first agreement for the relocation of art and cultural values linked to public buildings and places in the old city centre. According to the second agreement, the artworks in the next demolition stage will be handled directly by LKAB and not the municipality. So far, mainly artwork from or within buildings have been moved and placed in new premises. Next in line is public art, and most of the artworks are planned to be moved to the city park or near the new city centre.

Kiruna municipality has, as mentioned in Q 19 applied the national recommendation of the 1% rule since 2018. Due to the circumstances in the city transformation process, the 1% has not been applied correctly for new developments according to the 1% policy document. With our new strategic road map towards ECoC, we have a better plan on how the rule will be applied in new development projects.

During a press-conference in September 2024, LKAB announced that several more public buildings are affected by the city transformation and must be demolished and replaced by LKAB. This means that our main public Sports hall, a retirement home, two schools and preschools will be affected and needs to be demolished and built new within the near future. The 1 % rule will then be applied in the planning of these new facilities. The Region of Norrbotten will apply the 1 % rule for the new hospital in planning, the budget is not set yet, but the plan is for the new hospital to be in use by 2029-2030.

Organisational structure

Q30. & Q31.
Governance and delivery structure / Management and global leadership of the project

To make sure we work efficiently and make best use of available municipal staff, create a long-term legacy and keep valuable competence in our municipality, we will structure our ECoC organisation as a body within our municipal administrative office. The team will be handled as a temporary project organisation directly under the Municipal Management Administration and put together by current municipal staff, as well as recruiting new professionals according to the plan (see Q32).

The political structure will be put in place in 2025 by constituting a new political ECoC City Board within the municipality, with representatives from both the majority and opposition parties, this includes indigenous and minority culture representation. This is to ensure political stability and contingency throughout the ECoC timeframe, considering we face national and local elections in 2026.

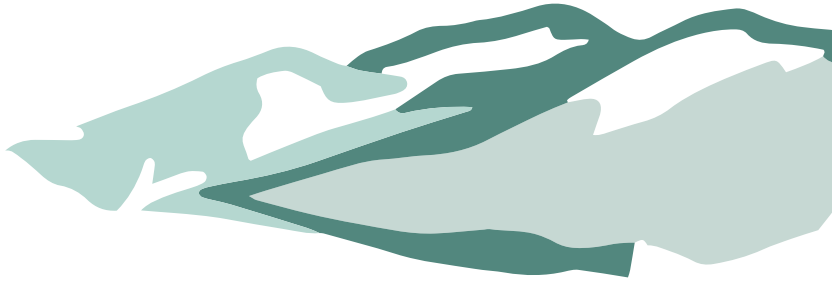
The General Director has the overall responsibility and final decision in the ECoC organisation at operational level in terms of budget, structure and being the spokesperson for the ECoC action in general. This position reports to the ECoC City Board and is the link between the ECoC organisation and the political structure, ensuring a reasonable distance between the administrative city office and the ECoC team. The Artistic Director has the responsibility to follow the artistic vision, is the spokesperson for the artistic work and has the final decision for the cultural programme.

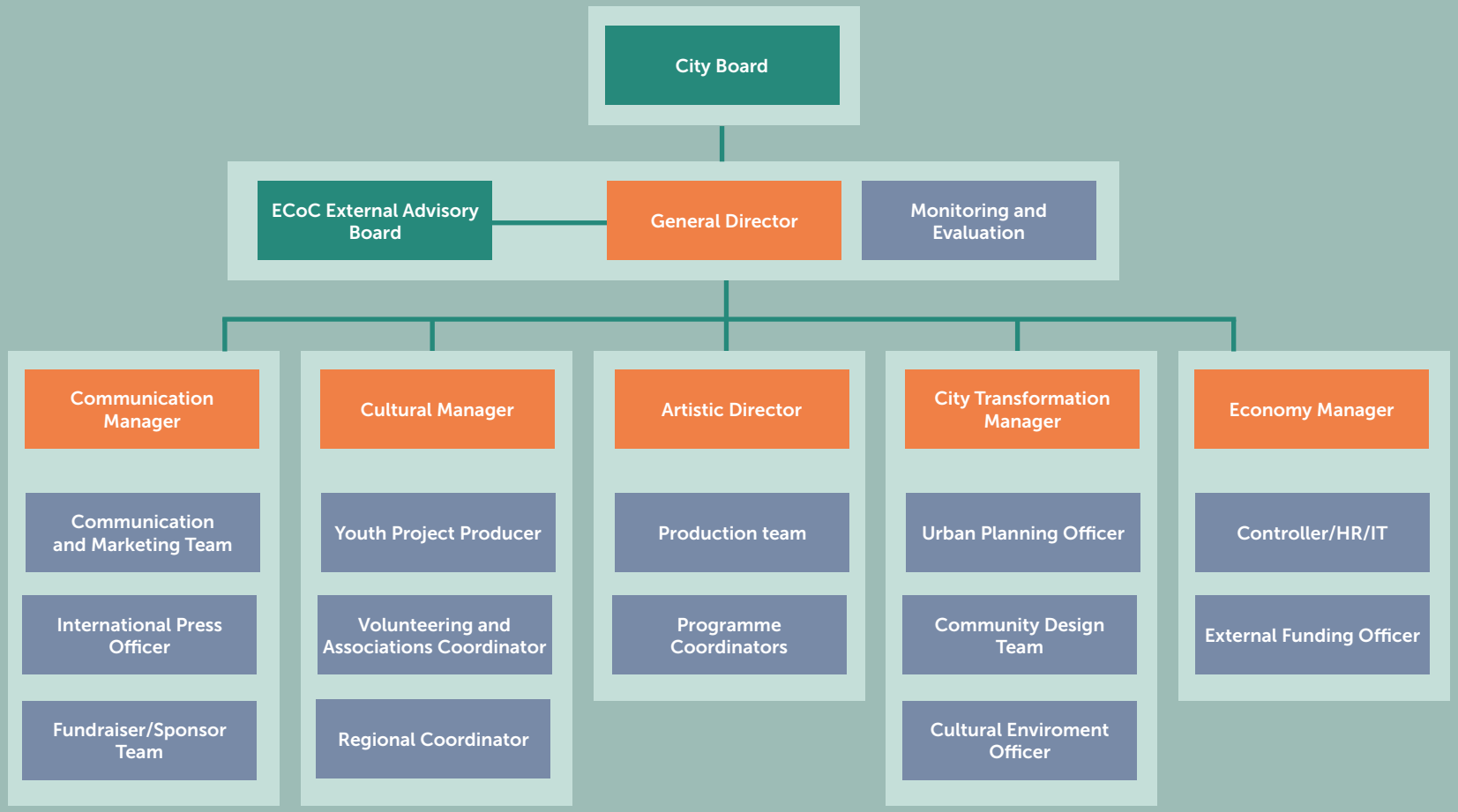
To make sure we keep a regional perspective, involving private business and keep a European relevance in our work, we will also put together an ECoC External Advisory Board of Representatives from the Region Norrbotten, private sector, previous ECoC cities and the Ministry of Culture. This group won't have any decision-making mandate but gives guidance and receives reports about the work from the General Director, who will meet with the Advisory Board a few times a year.

Artistic freedom must be maintained for Ecoc, arm's length from political and sponsors regarding the artistic content must prevail.

We have structured the organisation with five leading managers, with production teams and co-workers reporting to their respective managers. The position of a City Transformation Manager might be an unusual addition to a general ECoC team in other cities, but given our specific circumstances, our ECoC organisation must keep a close link between the city planners and city transformation projects and the ECoC action, to not become two separate operations. The same goes for the municipal cultural department and the ECoC team, hence why we dedicate a Cultural Manager to make sure we relate and integrate the ECoC action with the Cultural department. Given the focus on private sponsors, we have also included a sponsorship position, making sure we put resources into developing the right relationships with the private sector and securing our budget.

A clear delegation order for the General Director and Managers will be outlined, stating the responsibilities and mandate of each position in the organisation.




City Board
ECoC External Advisory Board
General Director
Monitoring and Evaluation
Communication Manager
Communication and Marketing Team
International Press Officer
Fundraiser/Sponsor Team
Cultural Manager
Youth Project Producer
Volunteering and Associations Coordinator
Regional Coordinator
Artistic Director
Production team
Programme Coordinators
City Transformation Manager
Urban Planning Officer
Community Design Team
Cultural Enviroment Officer
Economy Manager
Controller/HR/IT
External Funding Officer

Q32.

Ensuring staff with the skill to plan, manage and deliver the cultural programme

To make sure we follow our artistic vision and strategy of retaining our young community and a Sami and Tornedalian perspective in our programme, we have included specific positions for this in our artistic team. Producers who will stimulate, coordinate and make sure we are including our target groups and vision throughout our entire artistic work. As a part of our on-boarding process of staff to the ECoC team, we will include a cultural educational programme on minority and indigenous cultures. It is very important to us that the staff working in the ECoC team have knowledge and understanding of Sami and Tornedalian culture. This educational programme will run at regular intervals for the entire ECoC team and throughout the years.

Some of the positions needed will be filled by current municipal employees, as secondments. To find the right skillset for the different positions, we'll use external help to reach out to both national and international job markets. Through the networks of our partners like Norrbotten Region, Kin Museum for Contemporary Art, Aurora Culture and Congress Centre, Giron Sámi Teáhter, Tornedalsteatern, Icehotel and many others, we are assured to reach out to both national and international creatives for our ECoC organisation.

The table on p.79 shows the number of different types of positions needed in every team, ranging from part-time to full-time positions.

The Directors and Managers are included in the Project Team. We show the overall numbers of staff – who are not all full-time positions. At the bottom we show how many full-time equivalents the positions correspond to.

BRITTA MARAKATT-LABBA
PRACTICING HER KNOWLEDGE

Staff timetable

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Project team	6	6	6	6	6	6
Artistic team	1	5	5	5	6	1
Cultural manager team	1	3	4	4	4	1
Communication team	5	5	5	5	5	3
City transformation team	2	3	3	3	3	1
Economy team	1	2	2	2	2	2
Admin team	4	4	4	4	4	1
Equivalent full-time position	**6,5**	**10**	**15**	**17**	**18**	**5**

Q33.

Cooperation between our local authorities and our Kiruna 2029 organisation

Forming an organisation within the municipality gives us the benefit of having a close relationship and synergies with our local authorities, the different municipal departments and the dedicated ECoC team. The General Director will report back to the City Board a few times a year, making sure there will be no undue interference by the City Administrative Council or politicians with the ECoC team. The team will preferably use an office space that is visible for the public to create visual awareness of the ECoC action and easy contact with all external partners. The organisation must be flexible, fast-moving and adaptable, as the team will grow rapidly over the years with a clear goal of delivering the ECoC programme.

As the ECoC team is set up as a temporary office, knowing the main programme activities will be over in 2030, the organisation will have a higher tempo and be highly artistic and creative, making the team slightly different to our usual municipal projects. The remaining structures are to be integrated in the permanent municipal organisation after 2029.

The ECoC economy will have its own separate account, not to risk being mixed in with other city budgets and handling external money on specific accounts for clear economic reports.

Q34.

General Director and Artistic Director

Being a public authority, we are obliged to follow open and public recruitment processes. Open calls for the General Director and all managing positions will start in January 2025 if we are designated as ECoC. Although planning for full-time positions, we expect the natural delay in securing the key positions of the ECoC team to result in a 70% average employment during the first year. Our planned timeframe is to have the Project Team led by the General Director and the managing positions in place by June 2025.

As we are fully aware, taking the leap and moving to Kiruna for a job offer will take a few months and we are prepared for 2025 being the start-up year for both the operational as well as political structure to fall into place. We will offer a flexible and dynamic work-situation, being open to individual situations of the different team-members working remotely and apply a hybrid working model where needed.

THE SKILLSET OF THE GENERAL DIRECTOR

- Excellent leadership skills, previous experience of cultural organisations, institutes or large-scale cultural projects or complex development tasks
- International competences and experience
- Skills to handle and solve internal and
- external conflicts
- Practical understanding of political systems
- Meritorious with administrative, financial, or legal background.
- A creative mindset and passion to deliver the artistic vision and follow the key objectives.

THE SKILL SET OF THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

- Cultural background and experience in managing complex and large-scale project, preferably with international experience
- Artistic competence, engagement and an openness to implement the vision of the bid book
- A widely based network among external operators and partners
- Ability to be flexible, rethink processes and apply creative thinking for a changing programme content
- Experience in audience development, community involvement, participatory culture, and in capacity-building projects
- English language skills

Contingency planning

Q35 & Q36.

Kiruna 2029 risk assessment and migitation measures

During this selection phase we dug deeper into the risk assessment, including external partners to review a wider picture of risks involved with the ECoC and potential risk mitigation actions. We also carried out a larger workshop with a dedicated team from different departments in the municipality, led by the external partner European Minds. We looked at both internal and external risks. Together with the Steering Board for the bidding phase, we have gone through all the risks, forming a synthesised table as shown below, with likelihood and level of impact linked to each chapter in our bid.

Kiruna 2029 risk assessment and migitation measures

Area	Risks	Likely-hood	Level of impact	Migitation measures	Responsibility
Contribution to long term strategy	Changes in the municipality's cultural strategy and overall objectives, influenced by political shifts.	2	2	Ensure alignment of cultural objectives with the municipality's long-term goals, while remaining adaptable to changes. Seek a broader political support and understanding.	Chair of Municipality Board
	Lack of engagement from stakeholders such as the business community.	2	4	Actively involve the business sector and other key actors through early engagement and collaboration.	Sponsor Team/ Cultural Manager
	Uncertainty surrounding the city transformation and its impacts.	3	2	Closely monitor the city transformation process and adjust plans as necessary to remain flexible.	City Transformation Manager
Cultural and Artistic Content	Difficulty involving local artists who may feel excluded or overshadowed by external initiatives.	2	3	Establish a local cultural council to support and encourage participation from local artists, including early outreach to underrepresented groups such as indigenous people. A dedicated resource is part of the project organisation.	Artistic Director/ Cultural Manager
	Lack of international recognition due to geographic distance from key cultural hubs.	2	3	Build partnerships with national and international cultural networks to raise the project's profile.	Artistic Director
European Dimention	Inability to keep pace with European cultural developments and establish meaningful relationships.	2	4	Actively pursue partnerships with European cultural institutions and networks. Tailor communication strategies to emphasize the project's European relevance and significance	Artistic Director/ Communication Manager
	Perception in the local community that the project's identity is too foreign, leading to lack of European relevance.	3	3	Encourage cross-cultural exchanges and collaborations to bridge gaps in understanding. Actively communicating the added value of a European dimension.	Artistic Director/ Communication Manager

Area	Risks	Likely-hood	Level of impact	Migitation measures	Responsibility
Outreach	Limited public interest or participation, especially from local organisations and civil society.	1	2	Develop a clear communication plan that includes collaboration with local organisations, and provide opportunities for them to co-produce events.	Communication Mangager
	Failure to engage schools and younger audiences.	2	2	Set up specific councils or committees to reach different target groups, such as young people and rural residents.	Cultural Manager
	Lack of relevance for rural communities compared to urban areas.	3	3	Create a geographically diverse program that includes mobile offices or events to ensure outreach to rural areas.	Artistic Director/ Cultural Manager
	Failure to involve national minorities in the region.	2	4	Tailor outreach efforts with dedicated educational programs and responsible teams.	Artistic Director/ Cultural Manager
Management	Ineffective organisational structure, lack of sufficient resources and expertise to handle complex cultural projects.	2	4	Regularly evaluate the organisational structure and make adjustments as needed to improve efficiency. Invest in staff training and provide ongoing support to enhance expertise. Establish clear roles for collaboration with partners to maximise resource efficiency.	General Director
	Limited financial resources.	2	5	Regularly evaluate the organisational structure and make adjustments as needed to improve efficiency. Invest in staff training and provide ongoing support to enhance expertise. Establish clear roles for collaboration with partners to maximise resource efficiency.	General Director/ Sponsor Team
Capacity to Deliver	Uncertainties regarding local and regional infrastructure due to city and societal transformation	2	4	Maintain close dialogue with representatives of relevant regional and national authorities and actors. Plan interventions based on prevailing conditions.	City Director
	External threats based on Kirunas positions in the Arctic region such as different geopolitical risks	1	5	Activate existing contingency plans to handle external risks, including emergency preparedness and response strategies. Follow general guidelines and national recommendations	City Director

Q37.
Our cultural programme in a slogan

Kiruna's journey towards becoming the European Capital of Culture 2029 is a story of Movement – Below Ground, On Earth, In Space. This isn't just a slogan. It is a reflection of our people and our land. It embodies Kiruna's physical relocation, its historical and cultural transformation, and its connection to the surrounding nature, the traditions of the indigenous people who have lived here always and those who came later. It tells the story of facing challenges head-on while ensuring that every step we take is done with care.

From the compelling story we are ready to share with Europe, we can create slogans like:

Feel the Movement invites everyone to listen, observe, and experience Kiruna's cultural transformation. It encourages people from near and far to witness this unique journey.

Be the Movement calls for active participation, urging people to engage, share their perspectives, and become ambassadors for Kiruna.

Create the Movement goes further, encouraging co-creation and collaboration in building this cultural dream. We invite people to help produce and shape the cultural programme of 2029.

Q38. & Q40.
Marketing and communication strategy and Mobilizing our citizens as communicators of Kiruna 2029

Kiruna is no ordinary city. We live far north on the edge of the Arctic, where movement isn't just a necessity, it's a way of life. Our city is literally on the move, relocating itself to protect both its people and the planet. But this movement is about much more—it's about cultural transformation, innovation, and resilience. And with all that in mind, our strategy will focus on telling a unique story of survival, rebirth, and ambition—one that extends from the deepest mines to the far reaches of space.

Our communication strategy will embody this narrative, allowing people to feel Kiruna's movement, whether they're standing here in the Arctic cold or following our story from across Europe. Through storytelling, visuals, and experiences, we aim to bring Kiruna's journey to life and capture hearts both locally and globally.

Our communication plan is built with three key pillars driving our strategy:

Engaging Audiences at Every Level—
Locally, nationally, and across Europe.

Embracing Digital Tools and Creativity—
To spark global attention.

Showcasing Kiruna's One-of-a-Kind Story—
Through stunning visuals, immersive experiences, and heartfelt storytelling.

KEY ELEMENTS OF OUR MARKETING STRATEGY

1. Kiruna's People Are the Heart of Our Communication
Our citizens aren't just bystanders—they're the driving force behind Kiruna 2029. Kiruna's story belongs to them, and they'll be the ones telling it. From miners and Sami storytellers to artists and space engineers, our people will shape and spread the story of Movement – Below Ground, On Earth, In Space.

We'll equip them with toolkits, templates, and creative freedom so they can bring their voices into the spotlight. This isn't a top-down approach – this is grass-roots. And the world will hear it.

Community Ownership: This is a shared journey. We want everyone in Kiruna to feel like they are part of this massive movement, whether they're organising cultural events or simply sharing their stories.

Indigenous and minority voices: Kiruna is home to the indigenous Sami people and the Tornedalian minorities and these cultures will be a key part of our narrative. We'll highlight and practice their knowledge, wisdom, and resilience as central to Kiruna's story of transformation.

Grass-roots Mobilisation: From word-of-mouth campaigns to local pop-up events, our people will become our most powerful advocates.

2. A Visitor-Centred and Strategic Approach
Kiruna 2029 will be welcoming the world to join our transformation. Our strategy will be proactive and strategic, designed to reach visitors across Europe and beyond, offering a tailor-made experience for everyone—whether you're a tourist, an artist, or a curious observer.

Phased Approach: Our communication will adapt as we move closer to 2029, keeping the message clear and exciting at every stage.

Tailored Campaigns: We'll create specific campaigns that speak to different audiences, from our own citizens to global tourists and international cultural influencers.

Balance of Channels: Our outreach will span traditional media, digital platforms, and face-to-face interactions to ensure meaningful connections with all audiences.

3. The Power of Kiruna's Unique Story
Kiruna's story of movement and transformation is like no other. A city that's physically moving, surrounded by stunning landscapes, with a history tied to both the land and the stars –this is what makes us stand out. Our graphic identity will be built around the light, nature, and beauty of Kiruna, capturing the city's story from every angle.

Visual Branding: Our identity will be bright, bold, reflecting the Arctic light. Whether in print, on digital platforms, or in public spaces, the visuals will tell a powerful story of our Movement.

Storytelling: Through documentaries, personal stories, and digital features, we'll show the world what it's like to live in Kiruna during this monumental time of change.

4. Bridging the Distance with Digital Presence
Yes, we're far north – but we're closer than ever thanks to digital tools. Our communication strategy will make sure that distance is no barrier. Through a dynamic website, interactive apps, and a strong presence across social media, we'll bring Kiruna to the screens and hearts of people all over the world.

Website & App: Our website will be the main hub of information, featuring an interactive calendar, immersive content, and AR/VR experiences for those who want to get a taste of Kiruna from afar. Provided also through our project Digital Art Room.

Social Media: Our social media campaign will be all about engagement, encouraging user-generated content and making sure our story reaches new audiences through platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

PHASED COMMUNICATION PLAN

We're not just preparing for a one-year event. This is a long-term journey, and our communication will follow four key phases:

Phase 1 (2025-2027): Build awareness locally, regionally, and nationally. We'll recruit local ambassadors, engage the surrounding communities, and create fact-filled, inspiring content to get everyone on board.

Phase 2 (Global Buzz): As we move closer to 2029, our focus will shift outward, attracting international visitors, media attention, and building excitement around Kiruna's unique narrative.

Phase 3 (Event Year 2029): The spotlight will be on Kiruna. We'll make sure the world experiences our story, with seamless communication on logistics, event details, and creating an unforgettable visitor experience.

Phase 4 (Legacy Beyond 2029): Even after the event year, we'll ensure Kiruna's transformation story continues, building long-lasting partnerships and a powerful cultural legacy.

Q39.

Targeted Media Strategy and Partnerships

Kiruna 2029 aims to establish a comprehensive international media strategy where we build partnerships with media outlets across Europe and in selected global markets. Our goal is to make Kiruna not just a place to visit but a cultural phenomenon that is widely talked about—one that sparks curiosity, engagement, and conversation on a European and international level.

To ensure wide international coverage of Kiruna 2029 a key element is the hiring of an International Media Officer, as a part of the Marketing and Communication Team, whose primary role will be to build strong relationships with major European and global media outlets. This officer will lead efforts to organise press trips to Kiruna, offering journalists first-hand experiences of the city and region. They will also engage cultural influencers and digital ambassadors to spread the message across social media and online platforms.

Additionally, we will both partner with Visit Sweden, Swedish Lapland, Kiruna Lapland, as well as specialised PR agencies with expertise in promoting international cultural events. This agency will help us secure strategic media placements in key European markets like the UK, Germany, France, and Spain, as well as in select non-European countries. We will also collaborate with Swedish public service media, SR (Swedish Radio) and SVT (Swedish television), as well as engage Norway's public service NRK and Finland's YLE, to take advantage of our proximity to both countries and maximise cross-border exposure.

Our approach to creating global buzz will include a mix of traditional media, digital content, and influencer marketing. We plan to host exclusive media trips aligned with key milestones in the lead-up to 2029, ensuring timely coverage that builds anticipation. Partnerships with prominent European outlets like The Guardian, Le Monde, Die Zeit, and El Pais including a number of special interest media and online magazines will help ensure that Kiruna receives broad and sustained attention across the continent.

BRITTA MARAKATT-LABBA IN HER STUDIO

Q41.

Highlight the European Capital of Culture as an action of the European Union

Highlighting the ECoC as a brand of the European Union will have a two-way effect: It shows culture is a relevant element that we share and celebrate in Europe and is essential for our mutual understanding, best-practice exchanges and close cooperation. And it shows Europe that Kiruna and the Arctic cultures are a relevant part of Europe.

During these turbulent times, when Sweden is joining the NATO for reasons that many did not think were possible anymore, and we are drifting back into closing down European borders – the European Capital of Culture stands like a pillar of hope, symbolising resilience of the people, democratic values and the belief that culture is part of the answers that we are all looking for. ECoC also forces us (in a good way, of course) to look beyond and tune in to what we share and what we bring to each other across Europe. Many similarities and many valuable differences that ensure cultural diversity. Kiruna has a lot to bring into this mix and we will proudly show Kiruna 2029 as a European project and a project of the European Union.

We will play on the strengths of both brands, of Kiruna 2029 and the European Capital of Culture as a brand of the European Union. This brand has been enriched over the past 39 years by dozens of cities carrying out this large European cultural project. Each had to find their own way of highlighting and communicating Europe and the EU, finding their European dimension. We aim to latch onto the collective brand of European Capital of Culture, and then highlight the uniqueness of Kiruna as a feature for all. This will ensure we stay true to the core of the project without making the brand of ECoC too uniform.

The EU logo will appear on all communication materials and the opening ceremony will be a particular moment to highlight Kiruna 2029 as bearer of a title bestowed by the European Union. The Commissioner for Culture and their team, the representatives of the DG EAC, and the Swedish EU representatives will be invited to attend and officially open the Kiruna 2029 year. This includes some of the past, present and designated ECoC title holders as well as Lublin as the designated ECoC in Poland for 2029.

6 CAPACITY TO DELIVER

Q42.
Political support and commitment from relevant authorities

The municipal council took a formal and unanimous decision on 15th of May 2023 to support and proceed with an application for European Capital of Culture, reconfirmed on 7th of October 2024. The commitment to the ECoC application is not simply lip-service but seen as a means to counterbalance the cultural and social challenges Kiruna is struggling with.

Norrbottens Region, The Department of Regional Development, including both the cultural and business units, are highly involved, and have expressed a strong political commitment. On 25 September 2024, the Regional Development Board made the official commitment to support the application and the final decision on the budget by the Region Norrbotten will be made in February 2025 if Kiruna is designated as ECoC.

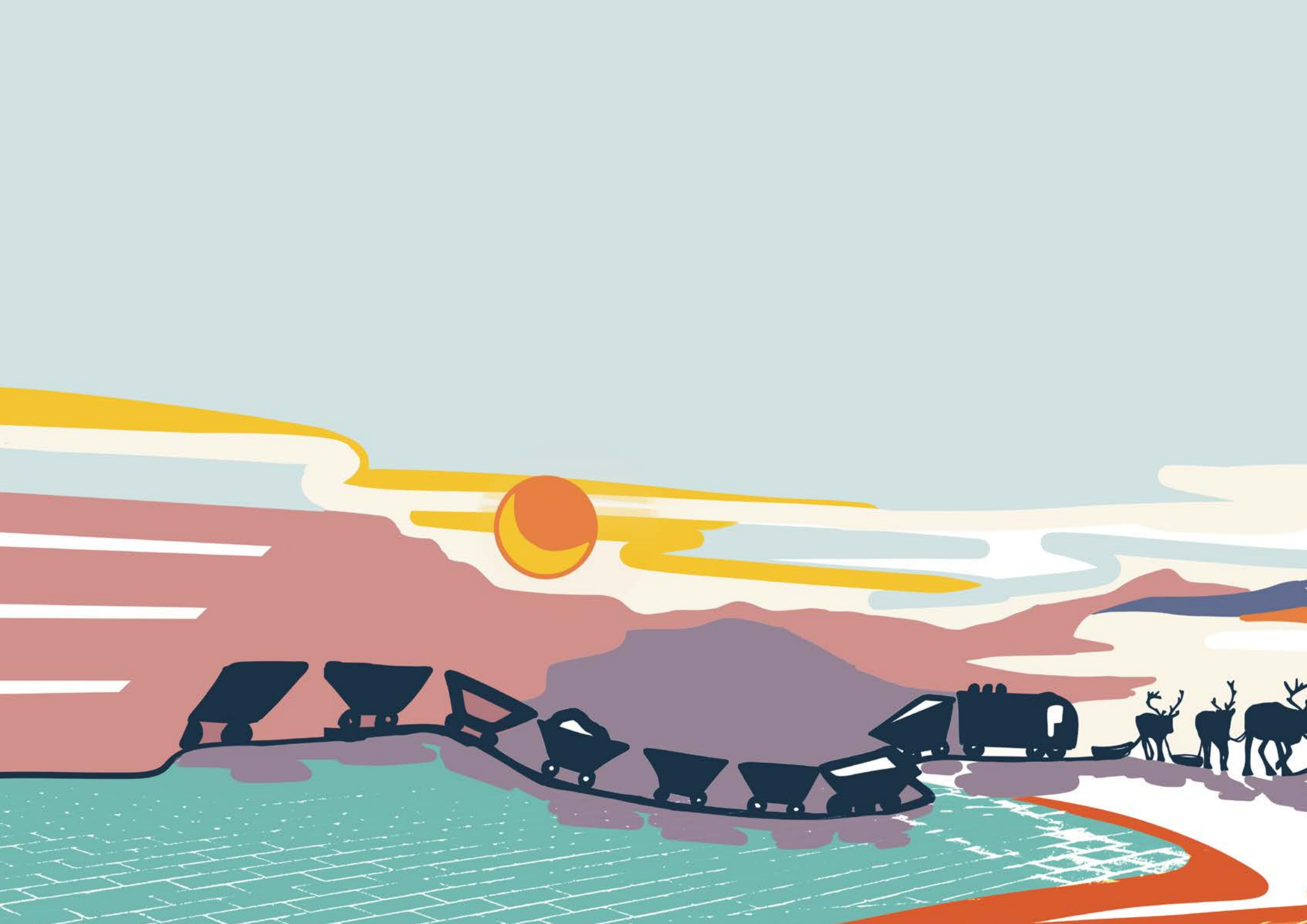
We have letters of support by Norrbottens Kommuner (the Association of Local and Regional Authorities Norrbotten's Municipalities), Länsstyrelsen Norrbotten and Länsstyrelsen Västerbotten (County Administrative Board of Norrbotten and Västerbotten).

Additionally, we are supported by around 20 other stakeholder groups ranging from public bodies to space research institutions.

Q43.
Plans for infrastructure

Please see our answer in chapter 5, Management Q25-29.

In addition to the planned infrastructure project outlined in Q25-29, we have a large new hotel opening in the city center in 2025. The Elite Hotel will offer 154 rooms.



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KIRUNA KOMMUN

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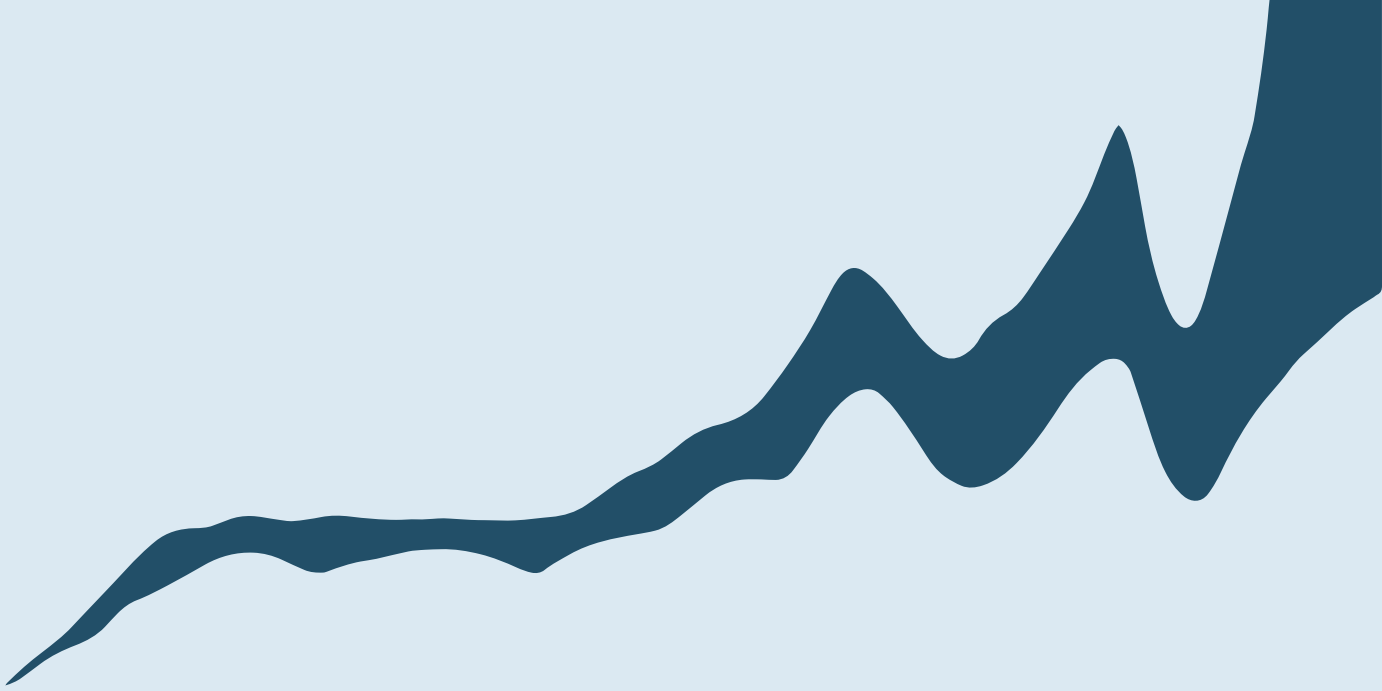

Movement. Below Ground. On Earth. In Space.